



SERIES: BOOK 6

How Is God Going To Choose His Bride?



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How Is God
Going To
Choose
His Bride?

J1

J2

Maturing The Bride

To Watch *Maturing The Bride*,

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This book is a part of the
Maturing the Bride series.
It is in both book and video form.

I highly recommend that you
read through the first books
before getting to this one.

But many of you will jump ahead
(as I probably would as well!:))

To help you understand what I'm talking
about, there are many references to the other
books and their chapters. Please read them
or watch them to get the full context.

May J1 and J2 change your life forever!

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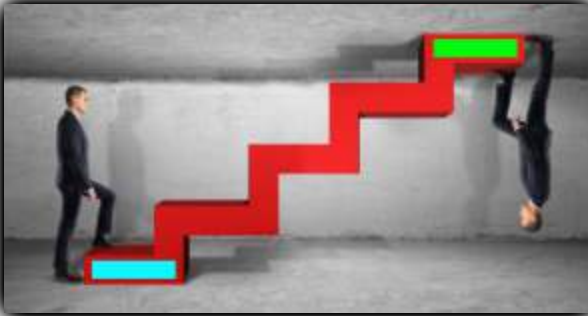
CHAPTER ONE

Judgment One and Judgment Two

Hello, and welcome to Maturing the Bride. We are starting a new book, Book 6. In this book, we will ask a straightforward question, and the question is; how is God going to choose His bride? The purpose of this book is to determine the answer to that question.

This is the first chapter, and it will do us well to direct our minds to an important point of reference throughout this book. We will refer to Judgement One (J1) and Judgement Two (J2). You will learn more about these concepts as we proceed.

Let us start by considering what is Optical illusion;



There are two men on a set of steps. Which side is gravity really on?

If you flipped the picture upside down, the green step would look

like gravity was helping it.

This illustration can be considered an optical illusion.

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Also, we have to the right what I call the “Stationary Stair Master!”

It seems like you are always going up, but in reality, it is still stationary.

There is something weird about the stairs. The more I look at it, the more I get confused!



It's nothing more than an optical illusion with the stairs.



Also, we have what I call the “Crazy Cube.”

Looking at it, it seems—once again, “There’s something wrong with that picture.”

You can’t place your hand on it—because it is an illusion.

Below is another weird one.

Which one’s eyes are the guy’s eyes? You can stare at it long and hard and walk away saying, “I have no idea!”



It is totally weird—and another illusion.

Contradictory Verses?

Interestingly, there are some scripture passages that I read as “scriptural illusions.”

You may look at the scriptural illusions as you look at the stairs and say, “Wait a second, this doesn’t make sense.”

One verse may say one thing, but another may say something that seems contradictory. And that is where we are going to begin. We are going to start with two verses of the Bible that seem to contradict themselves.

The first one is in the book of John, which says:

Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but has passed from death to life. (John 5:24)

These are the words of Jesus, and He is saying that if you believe in Him, you pass out of judgment. Meaning you are not going to be judged. Hallelujah! We have passed (note the past tense) out of judgment.

But Paul says something different:

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

In this verse, Paul was writing to the church, and the word “we” refers to Christians. We Christians must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Do you see the disconnect and contradiction?

Jesus in John 5:24 said that we would not be judged, and Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:10 that we will be judged. Who is right—Jesus or the Apostle Paul? (Quick, read the next paragraph so you don’t have to answer the question.)

The answer is that they are both right.

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John 5:24 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 can easily agree through straightforward understanding: *All Christians are going to be judged twice.*

*All Christians
are going to be
judge twice.*

I call them Judgment One (J1) and Judgment Two (J2).

J1 refers to Jesus' statement (John 5:24), and J2 refers to Apostle Paul's statement (Corinthians 5:10).

J1 is asking the question as to whether or not you believe. If you do, then you have passed out of J1. But after living your life on the earth, then comes J2. All Christians will stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

However, these judgments have two different purposes, and they are not the same. Let's briefly go over a few of them.

J1 is asking the question, *are you a believer?* Whereas J2 is asking something very different, *do you get rewards?* There are two different purposes to these judgments.

Here in the Corinthian passage, Paul uses "judgment seat" within the context of a common Greek word.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

The word "judgment seat of Christ" in Greek is 'Bema'; the Bema seat of Christ.

Here, the Bema Seat is a reference to the Olympics. If you do not know, Paul enjoyed the Olympic games that we enjoy today. The first official Olympic games was held around 776 BC. They have been around for a long, long time. That is why they are special.

And if you were to go to Corinth today and walk around the

Book Six: J1, J2

ruins, you would find the little sign that says, ‘the Bema seat.’ They knew exactly where it was.

At the Bema Seat, the winners of the Olympic event would come and stand before the mayor of the city (or the governor of the province), and receive their rewards.

So, the Bema seat, as construed by Paul, is associated with rewards.

Joseph Dillow writes in his excellent book, ‘*Final Destiny*’ these words;

After the victory celebrations, great honors were heaped on the athlete when he got home. A breach in the city wall was cut. This was to signify that the protection of the wall was no longer needed now that an athlete of this stature had returned home.

The winner was then placed on a chariot and led through the city in a festive procession. Many cities voted for substantial sums of money for the victors. Some made them Generals and the crowds idolized them so openly that the Greek Philosophers complained.

Poets were hired by the victor and his parents to pen odes to his greatness. These odes were sung by a chorus of boys in the procession that welcomed him home. Sculptures were paid to capture the athlete in his most athletic pose. Some cities fed the athlete’s children and wife at public expense for the rest of their lives. The children were allowed to enter the best academy in the ancient world, paid for by the city. The athlete was given a seat of honor on the city council and a box seat at the Isthmian games for the rest of his life. Last but not least, he was exempt from all income tax!

This bema seat was where you wanted to be if you wanted to be the victor—if you wanted to get the rewards for all your hard work. You wanted to finish in the first place, and then you would get to go before the bema seat.

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Brethren, Apostle Paul knew about this and used it as an analogy for future judgment.

He says, “If you want to get to the bema seat of Christ, you’ve got to finish strong. We are all going to be judged.”

But Paul adds something to the concept of the Bema Seat. He says, “It’s just not all the good things, but it’s for the evil things as well.”

The bottom line, Paul is trying to warn us that we will be judged on how we live our lives. And we will be judged for not only the good things we have done but the bad as well.

Differences Between J1 and J2

Let’s take a closer look at some of the differences between these two judgments.

In J1, the focus is on our faith. Do you have faith? Do you trust the Lord Jesus to be your savior? At J2, the focus is on your actions. What did you do to make Him famous, or did you live for yourself to make yourself famous?

- J1 is about what we believe. *J2 is about what we do.*
- J1 is free. It’s a gift; you do nothing to earn it. *J2 is very costly. You have to pick up your cross daily and follow him.*
- J1 is a one-time event. Coming to know Christ and starting a personal relationship with Him happens at a moment in time. *J2 is an ongoing task for the rest of your life. It is the holistic observation of how you lived your life. Are you living your life for yourself, or are you living your life for God? Are you making Him famous, or are you making yourself famous? It goes on for the rest of your life.*
- J1 celebrates that you are a child of God. *J2 wants to celebrate that you are a friend of God.*

If you have jumped into these and haven’t seen the previous books available online, you may have difficulty understanding the difference between a child of God and a friend of God. A child of God believes while a friend of God believes *and obeys*.

Book Six: J1, J2

Children have passed out of J1.

Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but is passed from death to life. (John 5:24)

Children have passed J1 with flying colors. The Lord is saying, “This is my child. He doesn’t even need to go there. He has passed out of judgment.”

But what is left is J2. This is where we are going to be held accountable. The average person doesn’t like the words, “I’m going to be held accountable,”—but it is a reality. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We are going to be held accountable for our lives. And it is not about our faith; it is about our faithfulness. And there is a huge difference between the two. We will be held accountable.

But let’s take a closer look at J1. Again, John 5:24 is loaded with lots of insights.

Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment but is passed from death to life. (John 5:24)

If you have not read Book 4 on Eternal Security, I encourage you to do that. In that book, we discuss the importance of why “has” is in the present tense and what that means. What do they presently have? They presently have Eternal life. Not temporary life or something that you can lose, but eternal life. And if you presently have something that is eternal, you can never lose it.

Remember from Book 4, our God is eager to save us. He loves to show mercy and grace because, for eternity past, He wasn’t able to do that. Now, He wants to lavish it on us; therefore, if you believe... He says, “If you believe in me, just trust in me; you have (present tense) eternal life.”

This goes hand in hand with what He says in 1 John.

Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have

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the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)

John says it with confidence; you and I have life. There is no fear of losing your salvation. There should be no fear of worrying, “Will I backslide and go to hell?”

You have eternal life *now* as a believer.

A Second Throne

But those who do not believe in Christ as their savior, will be going to a second throne. It is not the Bema Seat but the Great White throne in Revelation.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence, earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. (Revelation 20:11)

This great white throne is different from the bema seat. The text goes on to describe it.

Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:14-15)

The great white throne represents where people who will end up going to hell are judged. It is for non-believers. This is where God says, “Depart from me, for I never knew you.”

The Bema Seat is for Christians. The Great White Throne is for non-believers. There is a striking difference between these two.

Why The Bema Seat of Christ?

Why J2? Why are we going to be judged? I mean, didn't Jesus' blood pay for all of our sins?

If you are jumping into this series for the first time and haven't seen the other books, I encourage you to do so. If you have, the answer should be very clear. God is looking for a bride for His Son, and He doesn't want an immature bride. He wants a mature bride, and J2 will expose our maturity or immaturity.

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At J2, Jesus is basically asking, “Hey, I want to know if you are living for your kingdom or my kingdom. If you were living for my kingdom, you are mature. If you were living for your kingdom, you have been immature.”

Remember, Eternity Future and ruling and reigning with Christ is like a family business to God. You don’t just start at the top of the company—you have to earn your way up. God does not promote unskilled workers. We discovered this in Book 1.

We find this in the parable of the ten minas. We have seen it over and over again, but we are going to go through it one more time.

When he returned, having received the kingdom, he ordered these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, so that he might know what they had gained by doing business. (Luke 19:15)

Note that He wanted to know what they had gained by doing business. That is “God-talk” for “I am going to hold you accountable for what I put you in charge of.”

We don’t like to hear those words. We (erroneously) think Jesus’ blood has covered all our sins. That is true for J1 but not for J2.

At J2, He wants to look at your works, not your faith. J1 is about faith. J2 is about works.

That is why Paul said to the Corinthians

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. (1 Corinthians 4:1)

Stewards! The word steward means “the manager of a household or household affairs.” God has put us in charge of this earth (Genesis 1:28). He put us here and said, “I want you to govern the earth. I want you to rule over it. You are my stewards.”

And then Paul goes on to say:

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me, it is a very small thing that I

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should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

It is required that stewards be found faithful. Why? God is looking for a mature bride for His son. One who is not faithful is not mature. Maturity is a requirement for becoming a part of the bride—while faith is the requirement for getting into heaven.

But if you are thinking, “Nothing is required of me because already I prayed the prayer. I’m justified by faith; Jesus’ blood has paid for everything. Therefore, nothing is required of me.” *Then you are getting J1 and J2 mixed up.*

There are requirements for J2; it is conditional. However, there are no requirements for J1. Just faith.

Remember, men and women; there is a huge difference between faith and faithfulness. J1 requires faith. J2 requires faithfulness.

So, both passages are true. We have been exempted from judgment, but we will be judged. We have been exempted from J1, but we will be judged at J2.

Where Are The J’s?



There are books on the market today designed to simply take up time. One is called, *Where's Waldo?* It is a cartoon book with about 300 characters on one page, in small images, and one of them is named Waldo. He is always dressed the same, so you should easily find him. But it will take your time since there are so many characters to look at, all wearing something similar to Waldo.

Similar to *Where's Waldo*, at the end of each chapter, we will be looking for something as well. But it is not Waldo. It is “Where are the J’s?”

We will look through the scriptures and ask ourselves, “Where is J1, and where is J2?” Each scripture that is shown will have them; however, our understanding of J1 and J2 helps us identify them.

Now, let’s do a quick preview of what you are looking for.

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- J1 focuses on our faith, whereas J2 focuses on our works.
- J1 is what you believe, whereas J2 is what you do.
- J1 is free, whereas J2 is very costly.

We are going to go over three passages. Let's start with the first one.

#1: Ephesians 2

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Where is J1 in that passage, and where is J2 in that passage?

J1- For by grace, you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

J2- For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

#2: Titus 2

Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)

J1- Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness. (That is a J1 reference. He said, "You are not going to hell; you are going with me, my friend.")

But there was a purpose;

J2-And to purify for himself a people for his possession who are zealous for good works.

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#3: 1Peter 1:3-5

Blessed be the God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1Peter 1:3-5)

J1-Caused us to be born again to have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (You have got a relationship with God. You are guaranteed to go to heaven).

J2- To an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you (The inheritance has everything to do with your good works. Your good works earn you an inheritance. Your inheritance is J2).

In Review

John 5:24 says, "We are not going to be judged," but 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, "We are going to be judged." Which one is right? They are both right. Why?

All Christians are going to be judged twice. We call them J1 and J2, and both judgments have very different purposes. J1 says, "Are you a believer?" whereas J2 says, "Do you get rewards?" J1 focuses on faith, whereas J2 focuses on works. J1 focuses on what we believe, whereas J2 focuses on what we do.

So, the original question is, how will God choose a bride for His son? I want to help you to see it. What happens at J2 will help determine who His Son's bride will be.

In the next chapter, we will go deeper into understanding the differences between J1 and J2. Precisely, we will uncover ten differences between them.

Turn the page and keep on going!

CHAPTER TWO

Ten Differences Between J1 and J2

In this book, we are asking a very simple question: How will God choose His bride? What does He look at to determine who will acquire the right to be a part of the bride of Christ?

We've already gone over chapter one. In chapter one, we talked about the two passages of scripture which seem to contradict themselves—John 5:24 and 2 Corinthians 5:10. However, we learned that all Christians are going to be judged twice, and we classified the judgment into J1 and J2.

J1 asks the question, “Are you a believer?” whereas J2 asks the question, “Do you get rewards?” J1 focuses on your faith, whereas J2 focuses on your works.

Now, we will review ten differences between J1 and J2 and look at scriptural passages that support their differences, respectively. These differences are:

1. J1 is a one-time event, whereas J2 is ongoing.
2. J1 is unconditional, whereas J2 is very conditional.
3. J1 is when you are a child of God, and J2 is when you are a friend of God.
4. J1 focuses on your faith, whereas J2 focuses on your faithfulness.

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5. J1 is an heir of God, whereas J2 is becoming a co-heir with Christ.
6. J1 talks about being in Christ, whereas J2 talks about abiding in Christ.
7. J1 talks about being unworthy, whereas J2 talks about being worthy.
8. J1 talks about walking in the flesh, whereas J2 wants you to walk in the spirit.
9. J1 is free, whereas J2 is very costly.
10. J1 gives instant forgiveness, whereas J2 gives us daily forgiveness.

Now we will look at the ten above differences and support them with scriptures so you can understand the differences in God's word and how it applies to your life.

1. One-time versus Ongoing

To see how J1 relates to one-time, let's explore the book of John 1:12.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
(John 1:12)

John is writing to the Jews and Gentiles, so he is raising it differently for his audience. You can receive Him (Jews), and you can also believe in His name (Gentiles). But whichever one applies to you, He gives you the right to become a child of God.

As soon as you receive Him—or as soon as you believe in His name—you have the right to become a child of God. That is a one-time event—instantly becoming a child of God.

To see how J2 relates to ongoing, let's explore the book of Luke for the ongoing assessment of our lives.

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you

have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. (Luke 12:2-3)

This is in the context of Judgment Day. The text talks about something that was done in the past. We thought, “It was hidden. I thought nobody was watching.” But God says, “Oh no, I was there. I saw it. You thought it was hidden, but it is going to be proclaimed. Whatever you said in the dark will be heard in the light; whatever you have whispered will be proclaimed on the housetops.”

It is an evaluation, not just of the things done in the dark, but of our entire lives. Everything good and everything bad will be looked at. From the day we are born until the day we die. This is the purpose of J2 and why what will be judged at J2 is ongoing.

If you are reading this book, you are obviously alive. (Insightful on my part, isn’t it!) And if you are alive, God is still recording everything you are doing and keeping it for J2.

2. Unconditional versus conditional

J1 is totally unconditional. J2 is very conditional. Knowing the differences has helped many of my Christian friends who grew up in a legalistic religion.

To see how J1 is unconditional, we can look at Paul’s letter to the Romans.

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Dear reader, you don’t have to do anything for Christ to die for you. You don’t have to be anything for Christ to die for you. You don’t have to get better before you can say, “Jesus, please, accept me?” No, while you were yet sinners, Christ died for you. You don’t have to do anything or be anything. God’s love for you is totally unconditional.

But for J2, it is very conditional. Luke talks about this in his book.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own

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father and mother wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26)

Being a disciple is totally different from being a child of God. Being a disciple is like being a friend of God—it is all about obeying God. And in this passage, we see that if you want to be a disciple, you have to “hate” others—even yourself—to be a disciple. That is very conditional.

Jesus uses the word “hate,” but in the context of God’s word—which has to be taken into consideration—Jesus is saying, “You need to love these people less than you love me. If you love me more than them, then you can be my disciple.”

3. Child of God Versus Friend of God

Being a child of God allows you to pass the first judgment (J1). We’ve already seen this in John 5:24. But how do we become a child of God? Again, John addresses this.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

If you want to be a child of God, all you have to do is to believe. You need to trust Jesus to be your savior. No repentance is needed. We found this in Book 4 in the *Maturing the Bride* series.

Now, if you want to be a friend of God/Christ, that is different. Obedience is needed. We find this, again, in the book of John.

You are my friends if you do what I command you. (John 15:14)

Jesus is saying, “If you want to be my friend, you have to do what I command you.” *Note that it is conditional. That’s why the word “if” is there.*

Friends obey God. Children don’t always obey. Think of Paul’s words when he says, “For everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child. (Hebrews 5:13) Children live on milk, not solid food. They are unskilled in the word of righteousness and therefore are not obeying.

There is a difference between being a child of God and a friend of God.

4. Faith Versus Faithfulness

J2 focuses on faith. We find this in Ephesians:

For by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not of your own doing, it is a gift of God. Not as a result of works so that no one may boast.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)

Gaining salvation—getting into heaven—is about faith and faith alone. It is not about anything else. It is not about works. It is not about faith plus works. It is not about repentance. It is not about faith and repentance. It is not about faith and faithfulness. It is solely about faith.

But J2 is very different. It is not primarily about faith but more about faithfulness. We have seen it in Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Some Christians may reflect on this verse and think, “Is faithfulness really required? No! I’ve already prayed the prayer; why do I have to be faithful? I know Jesus, I have got a relationship with him, and I know I’m going to heaven. My sins are separated as far as the east is from the west. Nothing is required of me.”

Yes, that is true for J1; however, it doesn't count for J2.

For J2, He is looking for faithfulness. Why? Because the ultimate goal is not merely to get into heaven. The ultimate goal is to be a part of the bride of Christ, which requires faithfulness.

Remember, ruling and reigning with Christ is like a family business to God. And God doesn't promote unskilled workers to be at the top of the hierarchy. You have to earn your way to the top, and our faithfulness shows that.

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Faith and faithfulness are two different things, and so are J1 and J2. To pass J1, faith is required. To get a positive assessment at J2, faithfulness is required.

5. An Heir of God Versus a Co-heir With Christ.

Being an heir of God is in reference to J1. We can find the idea of being an heir of God in the book of Romans.

The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
(Romans 8:16-17)

Now, let me explain this to you by referencing the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites left Egypt and eventually made it to the Promised Land. The land was promised to them as an inheritance and given to them as their inheritance.

Twelve tribes got into the Promised Land. However, a close reading of the story will reveal that each tribe got land except one. One tribe did not get any land, and that was the tribe of Levi. We read this in Deuteronomy 18:1:

The Levitical priests, all the tribes of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the LORD's food offerings as their inheritance.
(Deuteronomy 18:1)

God is saying, "You're not going to get any land, but I have got something better for you." We will find out what it is in verse two.

They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.
(Deuteronomy 18:2)

God says, "I am your reward—the living God!"

We also need to note that when He uses the word "children" in Romans 8:16, He is using a word that basically refers to a young (therefore immature) child. That word is "teknon."

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But in verse 14, he uses the Greek word “huioi” which refers to a well-disciplined child. Paul obviously knew the difference between the two.

So, in Romans 8:16:

The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children (**teknon**) of God, and if children (**teknon**) then heirs of God. (Romans 8:16)

Immature children (who have a relationship with God) are guaranteed to have God as their reward.

But then he goes on and says these words;

And co-heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.
(Romans 8:17)

Now he is going to the next level. He wants us to see the difference between simply being a child of God and being a mature Christian. Mature Christians are “co-heirs with Christ.” In other words, whatever Christ inherits, we inherit.

And if you understood what was in Book 1, you’ll realize that Christ inherits the universe. As a result, we, too, will inherit the universe and rule over it with Christ while we sit with Him on His throne.

Now, to go deeper into this passage, I want you to know something about the New Testament. The original text had no commas and no periods. The original Greek is in capital letters, and it is one long run on a sentence. All commas, periods, and paragraph breaks are put there by man. They are not inspired.

Knowing this, I want to challenge you; I think one of these commas in Romans 8:17 is in the wrong place. It is the comma after the words “co-heirs with Christ.”

The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

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I believe that the comma is in the wrong place. I challenge you and hold the opinion that it should be here;

The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs-heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

We will be co-heirs with Christ, provided we suffer; *that's conditional*. What Paul is saying here flows with everything else we've learned. Being a co-heir is very conditional. Getting the right to rule and reign comes when we finish strong. If we don't finish strong, we will not rule and reign with Christ.

J2 is very conditional, and remember, it is very costly.

You can be an heir of God, have a relationship with Him, and enjoy Him forever, or you can go to the next step to be a co-heir and rule and reign with Him. However, to do that, you have got to be willing to suffer with Him, and that is the huge difference.

6. Being in Christ versus Abiding in Christ

John, who wrote the gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John, wrote them in such a way that differentiated between being a child of God and a friend of God. He differentiates this idea with different terms. In John 15, he uses the terms "in me" verse "abiding in me."

We see this starting in John 15.

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.
Every branch in me ... (John 15:1-2)

Paul knew what Jesus was talking about when He used the phrase "in me." Paul used it in his second letter to the Corinthians and gave it some definition.

Therefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

If you are *in Christ*, you are a new creation. That means you're born again. That means you have eternal life. And because it is

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eternal—and you presently have it—you can never lose it. It means you are a believer. That is what it means to be “in Christ.”

Now, back to John 15;

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit... (John 15:1-2)

Note clearly what is being said in this text. There are Christians who are *in Christ* who *do not bear fruit*. Though we all know of Christians who do not bear fruit, most of us think, “They’re probably not Christians.”

But this text refutes that. Jesus is saying, “I know that some of you who know me (who are in me) will not bear fruit.”

In verse three, He makes it clear that they are already believers.

Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. (John 15:3)

Clean is a reference to the Levitical priesthood. If they were clean, they were okay before God. He is using the same scriptural analogy.

Now notice in verse four, Jesus switches His wording. He is no longer talking about being “in Christ” but about “abiding in Christ.”

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (John 15:4)

There is a difference between being “in Christ” and “abiding in Christ.” Being “in Christ” refers to being a child of God. But “Abiding in Christ” refers to obeying Him and being a friend of God—or what is also called a disciple. These Christians bear fruit for God.

But what does it mean to abide in Christ?

Abiding in Christ means different things to different people. To me, it means spending time with Him and reading His Word. It means praying, having a relationship with God, and developing it.

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It means talking to God throughout the day. It means seeing His glory in nature. It means seeing His beauty in a sunset. It means taking everything to the glory of God. It means helping others in Jesus' name. In my life there are many ways to "abide in Christ."

Note again that those who abide in Christ bear fruit. Bearing fruit is conditional. Bearing fruit means getting rewards. It also means eventually getting to rule and reign.

Don't think you can simply be "in Christ" and get to rule and reign; that is not going to happen.

7. Unworthy Versus Worthy

If you were to go to most Christian institutions, you would find a prevailing idea that we are unworthy of anything we receive. However, I agree with the idea on one part and disagree with the other part.

We are unworthy for J1. But we are worthy for J2.

We find the idea of being unworthy from Luke.

Will anyone of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and recline at table'? Will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants: we have only done what was our duty.' (Luke 17:7-10)

We are unworthy of Christ to die for us. We were sinners. This is why it is mercy. This is why it is grace. Remember what Paul wrote in Romans, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." There is nothing found to be worthy in a sinner. This is referencing J1.

But we can be worthy at J2. We are worthy of rewards. We find this in Revelation 3. Let me give you the context.

In the first six verses of Revelation 3, he is speaking to the

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church at Sardis. In the first three verses, he talks about how most of the people in the church are hypocrites. He says that they have a reputation for being good, but they are dead. They are not living out what they say or confess.

Then in verse four, he switches. He switches from the Christians who are hypocrites to the ones who do walk the walk and talk the talk. And so, he is talking about those Christians who will finish strong. We discover this change by reading these words;

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments... (Revelation 3:4)

By not “soiling their garments,” he is saying that they are clean. They are not being stained by the world. They are being holy and pure. The text goes on.

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white... (Revelation 3:4)

The phrase “walking in white” references a wedding gown. Because they are unstained by the world, they have the privilege of being a part of the Bride! He then says these shocking words:

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy. (Revelation 3:4)

They are worthy! Why are they worthy? They are worthy because they kept themselves unstained from the world. They did not love the world as others did. They are worthy because they did not allow the world to influence them. They remained pure.

Let this sink into your mind. We are unworthy of J1, but we can be worthy of J2 by the choices we make in life.

8. Walking in the Flesh Versus in the Spirit

There are two places where Paul writes about walking in the flesh versus walking in the Spirit. One place is in Romans. The other is in a letter to the Galatians. Let's focus on the Galatians letter.

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In writing to the Galatians, Paul is writing to a church that knew they had freedom in Christ. They knew their sins had been nailed to the cross. They knew they didn't have to keep the 613 laws required by the religious leaders. But they took their freedom too far.

Not only did they not need to keep any of the 613 commandments, but they didn't want to keep any of the ten commandments which were for their good. Though technically, they were free to do so; God communicated that it would not be a good idea to break them.

But that's exactly what they were doing. They were using their freedom to fill up the fleshly desires inside of them. (I guess that they were sleeping around inside the church—which agrees with 1 Thessalonians 4:1-6.) Hence Paul writes to these Galatians:

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. (Galatians 5:13)

Paul was saying that what they were doing was not good. Yet he knew they had a choice because they were technically free. So later on in a few verses, he helps them to see the differences between these two choices. These differences are seen in the use of the words “walking in the flesh” and “walking in the Spirit.”

Please note that most Christians assume that anyone who walks in the flesh is a non-Christian. This is not what Paul is saying. He's saying as believers, we have a choice. Do we want to walk in the flesh or the Spirit? It is up to us to choose.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the

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kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:16-21)

The words “not inherit the kingdom of God” do not mean these people will go to hell. That is not the case. They are already believers and, once saved, always saved.

What Paul is saying is that they will not get their full rewards. He says, “If you are walking in the flesh—if you live according to your fleshly lusts—you will not get rewards. You are not going to get to rule and reign. And don’t forget, ruling and reigning is the primary goal of becoming a believer. So, if you walk in the flesh, you negate the primary purpose of why you have been called.”

Paul didn’t want that for them. That is why he says, “I warned you, as I warned you before.” Though we don’t hear about it in the church today, it seems to Paul that it was widespread knowledge in the church back then.

Romans 8:1-8 says the same thing. We have a choice. We—as believers—can walk in the flesh or walk in the Spirit.

The scriptures have different ways of referring to “walking in the Spirit.” Here are two others.

But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14)

If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25)

Some people don’t put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Others do not keep in step with the spirit. This is just another way of saying that they are *walking in the flesh*. And as a result, they will be losing out on so much—the eternal rewards of ruling and reigning with Christ forever and being ever so intimate and close to Him.

9. Free versus Costly

As you’ve probably heard since you were a child, getting into heaven is completely free! It doesn’t cost you a thing. There’s nothing you can do to earn it. Just accept the free gift.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God

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is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

And what you heard since a child is true. But this is not the same as getting rewards. Getting rewards is very costly.

So, therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:33)

If you want to be a disciple of Christ (not merely a child), you must renounce everything you have. It is very costly. But keep in mind the rewards are incredible, they last forever and there is a greater intimacy with Christ!

10. Instant Forgiveness Versus Daily Forgiveness

Becoming a Christian means instant forgiveness. This is why Jesus can say in John 5:24, “Has eternal life.” It is present tense and lasts forever.

J1 brings with it instant forgiveness.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)

We have redemption; it’s a done deal. (Note the present tense. It is something you currently have.) We are forgiven, and our sin is separated from us as far as the East is from the West.

But there are the everyday sins that pop up that need to be dealt with. These are the ones that *break our fellowship with God* (not our relationship). This is why the Bible also speaks about asking for forgiveness daily.

Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:11-12)

Do we have to do this daily? Yes, daily. Whenever you fall into sin, repent, get back up, and ask Him to fill you again with the Holy Spirit. Keep doing it regularly; to remain healthy—to keep abiding in Christ—to keep walking in the spirit. Keep repenting

whenever you fall into sin.

Conditional Verses

I want to challenge you to help you see the beauty of God's word. Any time you see conditional promises, it references J2, not J1.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.
Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your heart, you double-minded. (James 4:8)

That is very conditional; you have to draw near to God, cleans your hands, and purify your hearts and then He will draw near to you. This about J2 and it is speaking about intimacy with God—nor merely relationship with God.

By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. (John 13:35)

This is J2 and very conditional. If you want to be His disciple (have greater intimacy with Christ and get full rewards), you have to love one another.

If we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us. (2Timothy 2:12)

You don't get to rule and reign unless you endure. This is totally about J2.

For we have come to share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:14)

If you read Book 1 in *Maturing the Bride*, you already know that can be accurately translated from the Greek 'Partner with Christ.' The words, "If indeed" make it very conditional. It's referring to J2.

You will not rule and reign unless you finish firm to the end. It is not talking about how to stay strong to be saved. (No, once saved, always saved.) It says, "You have got to finish strong if you want that closer intimacy with Christ and want to rule and reign."

Finding J1 and J2.

Let's look at our three more verses and see if you can decipher where J1 and J2 are.

Passage 1: Titus 3:8

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works.
(Titus 3:8)

J1-so that those who have believed in God.

J2-may be careful to devote themselves to good works.

Passage 2: Isaiah 1:16-17

Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deed from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. (Isaiah 1:16-17)

J1- Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; .

J2- Remove the evil of your deed from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

Passage 3: Hebrews 11:6

And without faith, it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
(Hebrews 11:6)

J1-Must believe that he exists-relationship.

J2-And that he rewards those who seek him.

Let's Review

We've gone over ten differences between J1 and J2. Let's fly through them very quickly;

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1. J1-is a one-time event. J2-is ongoing.
2. J1-is unconditional. J2-is very conditional.
3. J1-you are a child of God. J2-you are a friend of God.
4. J1-is about faith. J2-is about faithfulness.
5. J1-is being an heir of God. J2-is being a co-heir with Christ.
6. J1-is being in Christ. J2-is abiding in Christ.
7. J1-you're unworthy. J2-you can be very worthy.
8. J1-walking in the flesh. J2-walking in the spirit.
9. J1-is free. J2-is very costly.
10. J1-there's instant forgiveness, whereas in J2-there is daily forgiveness needed.

Now I was teaching this years ago to a group of 20-30 professionals. One woman raised her hand and said, "If God is going to review our lives. I have got a problem with that." I asked, "What is that?"

She said, "I have had an abortion." Then she asked, "Is God going to hold me accountable for that abortion?"

In the next chapter, we will address whether or not our sins be discussed at J2.

CHAPTER THREE

Will My Sin Come Up at J2?

Will any of our sins come up at J2? This is the question I was asked by a young lady who said, “Listen, I have had an abortion, is God going to bring up my abortion? Is God going to hold me accountable for that?”

It was a great question, but before we answer it. Let’s be sure you’re awake and following the main gist of this message.

At J1, our sin will never be brought up. It’s already been dealt with. In Psalm 103:11-12 we read these words;

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so
great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;
as far as the east is from the west, so far does he
remove our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:11-12)

How far is the East from the West? It’s an infinite distance, and the idea that our sin is separated from us as far as the East is from the West deals with J1. Your sin will never be brought up at J1, so don’t worry about it.

Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and
believes in him who sent me has eternal life. He does
not come into judgment but is passed from death to
life. (John 5:24)

If you are a believer, you have passed J1 and will not come into judgment. Your sins are completely forgiven, and you have a

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relationship with God.

But if you're a detailed person, you realize that wasn't her question. Her question was, "Will it be brought up at J2?"

There is a short answer, and there is a long answer. Firstly, I am going to address the short answer. The short answer is, "No, not if it has been confessed."

When that young lady asked me that question, I asked her, "Have you confessed that sin?"

She said, "Yes."

I said, "It will never be brought up at J2."

Confessed sins will never be brought up at J2. The blood of Jesus covers all confessed sin. It is covered by the goat that was sacrificed. (Please read Book 4 Chapter 2 if you are not familiar with this.)

Where are we assured of this?

If you'll recall, John, the writer of the gospel of John, not only wrote the gospel of John but also wrote three other books; 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John. Cumulatively, he authored four books of the Bible.

And in the first book, the gospel of John, he says, "I will tell you why I wrote the book. I wrote it so that you can learn how to be saved." And he says this at the end of this book;

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

Remember, he was writing to both Jews and Gentiles. Anyone can read the book and learn how to be saved.

Note that if you have searched for the word repent or repentance in the book of John, you will find they come up zero times. John did not say you have to repent so as to believe in His name and be

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saved; zero. It doesn't have to happen that way.

But then he wrote 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John; it is very clear these books were written to people who were already believers. How do we know that? By how he addresses them.

In 1 John 2:12-14, it says, I am writing to you "little children," I am writing to "young men," I am writing to you "fathers." These are already believers that he is writing to. And in the first chapter, we read these words:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

John knows that believers still sin. And he's trying to help them deal with that sin. He knows they need to restore their fellowship with God. So, he says, "Hey, believers, if you have sinned and you realize that you have sinned, confess it. Then it will be forgiven."

That is why confessed sin will never be brought up in J2. It is forgiven after it is confessed. *Confessing it doesn't restore your relationship with God; it restores your fellowship with God.*

You have got to remember this goes back to the Levitical times with the priesthood on the Day of Atonement. Two goats were sacrificed. Both were sin offerings. Remember, one was for beginning a relationship; the other was for restoring fellowship. (Please read Book 4, Chapter 2 if you haven't already.)

So, the book of John talks about beginning a relationship with God, whereas 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John talk about keeping our fellowship with God complete.

So, confessing sin as a believer deals with our fellowship. And that is a big part of what J2 is all about.

Now, I want you to see the absolute beauty of 1 John 1:9. John had such insight when he wrote this, and it has two parts.

The Iceberg Analogy

To understand these two parts, I want you to know that our sin is like an iceberg. If you look at an iceberg, 10% is above the water,

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and 90% is below the water.

Our sin is like an iceberg. The 10% above the water represents what we are held accountable for in light of our fellowship with God. We know it is wrong, and we are held accountable for it.

Things like anger, lying, murder, pornography, adultery, divorce, and fighting are wrong, so we are held accountable for them. Gladly, if we confess to them before God, they get forgiven.

But remember that 90% of our sins are below the water. These are sins we don't know about. It could be subtle pride, lust, or idols in our job or career, or it might be our car. It could be worrying too much or simply lacking or having little trust in God.

We're not aware of these yet because the Holy Spirit hasn't convicted us of it. (If God were to show us the 90% that we are not mindful of, we would be devastated.) However, because we are not held accountable for them, these sins do not destroy our fellowship with God.

God says, "I know about all of your sins. But for now, just worry about the 10% above the water. We will deal with 90% later."

But 1 John 1:9 addresses the 10% above *and* 90% below the water. The 10% is addressed in the first half of the verse.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. (1 John 1:9a)

The words, "If we confess our sin" means that this must be something we know about! Yes, he is referring to part 1; the 10% above the water, the 10% we are held accountable for. God is saying through John, "If you know about your sin, and you confess

it, it is dealt with. You are forgiven.”

But then, he addresses the 90% in the second part of the verse.

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9b)

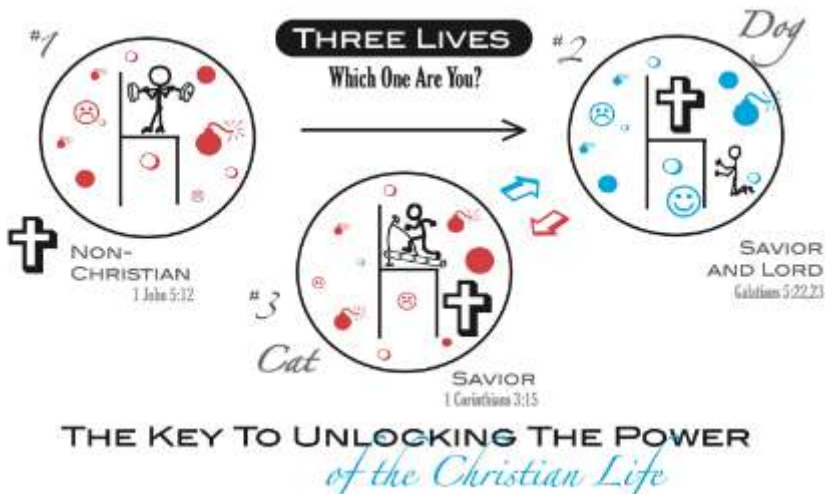
The unrighteousness that he is referring to is the sin “below the water.” We’re not even aware of it. It’s the sins that would keep us from healthy fellowship with God, but God hasn’t brought it up yet. And God is saying, “Because I am holy and all sin must be dealt with, I just want you to know that I’ve forgiven that other 90% as well.”

When we confess our sins, we are completely clean. It is as if we have never sinned. And if we ask Him to take back control of our lives (ensure you read Book 4, Chapter 3, “Broken Fellowship”), our fellowship with God is restored.

The Three Circles

The best way I can help us understand this is through three circles that I was taught when I was in ministry in my college years called Cru. I talked about this in Book 4, Chapter 3. So, if you’re all caught up, you can skip to the next chapter. But if you haven’t, I really encourage you to focus on this and put it into practice.

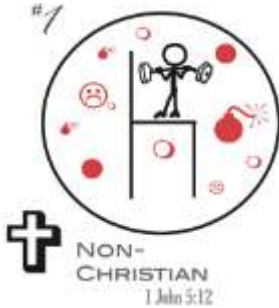
These three circles have guided my life for the past forty years. They have influenced my marriage, parenting, and ministry. It has influenced every area of my life.



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These three circles on the previous page represent all of humanity.

Let me explain the several parts of the circle to you. A circle represents a person's life. The chair represents the throne. (Who is in charge of that life? Who is running that life?) The cross represents Christ.



In Circle #1, Christ is outside this person's life. This is a non-believer. This is a person who does not have Christ inside their life.

The person is represented by the person sitting on the throne. They are running their own life. They think they are strong. They are thinking to themselves, "I can run my own life myself. I don't need God in any way, shape, or form."

And inside this person's life are some things that are going crazy. There are fights and quarrels. There are hidden "bombs" that can go off at any time. There are unhealthy relationships and sadness. Let's simply call it a dysfunctional life. This life represents by dysfunction.

Then there are two other lives I call the Dog Life and the Cat Life.

The second life is called the Dog Life; in this life, the person has invited God into their life; Christ is on the throne of their life. They have yielded to Christ, and Christ eventually puts their life in order.



It is not a perfect life by any means, but their life is pretty much in order. They constantly ask, "How can I use this for the glory of God?" and so this life is primarily characterized by peace and purpose.



But there is a third life we call the Cat Life. This is a person who has invited Christ into their life. They have a relationship with Him but have taken Christ off the throne of their life. They say, “I want to do things my way. I want to run my life my way.” I call this broken fellowship with God.

Their life is like being on a treadmill. Their life is hard, and they don’t have much purpose in life. They also don’t have much peace. Life is a long uphill climb, and their life looks like they are non-Christian. They have Christ as their savior, but He is not their Lord. They have a relationship with God but not fellowship.

Peter calls this kind of life an “unproductive” or “unfruitful” life (2 Peter 1:8).

Spiritual Breathing

When we realize we are Cats, how do we get from the Cat Life back to the Dog Life?

The best teaching, I have ever heard of in this area is called “spiritual breathing.” Spiritual breathing has two components;

1. Exhale
2. Inhale.

Exhaling is confession; confessing the 10% above the waterline we know is wrong. “Lord, I know hitting my children was wrong. Lord, I know lying to my wife was wrong. Lord, I knew stealing from the office was wrong. Please forgive me, God.” When we confess that 10%, above water, God forgives us.

He not only cleanses us from whatever we have confessed in the 10%, but He also cleanses us of the 90%, everything below the water. Everything is forgiven and cleansed. We stand before God as if we have never sinned.

But the spiritual breathing doesn’t just stop there. Exhaling is

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just the first part.

The second part is the inhale part. When you inhale, you are asking God to fill you. You are asking God to get back on the throne of your life. You are telling God that you want to yield to Him. We learn this from Ephesians 5:18;

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery but be filled with the spirit. (Ephesians 5:18)

The verb “be filled” with the spirit is a present continuous verb. He is saying, “Keep on being filled with the spirit.” It is present and continuous because God knows we are believers who can still sin. And when we do, He wants us to confess it and then give Him back control of our lives.

To help you understand this there is a joke about a couple who were at a church meeting. The pastor asks, “Who wants to come up front and be filled with the Spirit?” The husband gets up and starts walking down the aisle. But as he is walking, the wife yells, “Don’t do it, God, he leaks.” (You are supposed to be laughing at this point! :)

We all leak. We all have our old nature that wants to come out and wants to sprout its power and be in charge and be in control. We all fall back into that Cat Life. That is why this is a present continuous verb, “be filled with the spirit.” When we know we have done something wrong in that top 10%, confess it and then inhale. Ask God to take back control of our lives

Time Line

So, let me run you through a timeline in a bid to help you understand how this works correctly in a person’s life.

We have got Jane Doe. At this time in her life, she doesn’t know the Lord. She has got some bitterness, there’s been lots of shoplifting, and anger is built inside her. On top of that, she’s had an abortion and has lied about it all her life.

Then her boyfriend breaks up with her after sleeping with another woman. She gets so mad she tries to literally kill him. Through this, Jane came to the point of crisis in her life. She knew murder was wrong. She knew her life was not headed in the right

direction.

Eventually, she asks Christ to forgive her for trying to kill her old boyfriend. While doing this, she asks Christ to come into her life. Two things happen at this point.

First, God forgave her of the attempted murder—being a sin in the 10% of *her* “iceberg” above water. But not only did God forgive Jane for the attempted murder, but she was not aware of all her sins which were before God. Her past was completely forgiven. It’s as if she never sinned. She was completely clean. She passed J1, and whether she knows it or not, she has eternal security.

Let’s say this happened in January of 2023.

Though she is a new person (2 Corinthians 5:17), some old habits die hard. And she ends up stealing more and lying about it. But now the Holy Spirit is convicting her more and more. And she realizes that stealing is wrong. It just moved up into the top “10% of the iceberg.” So, she gets down on her knees, and once again, she says, “Lord Jesus, forgive me.”

At this point, she is forgiven. Not only of the shoplifting and the lies but of everything else she isn’t even aware of since the last time she confessed her sin.

But she didn’t ask God to take control of her life. And so, as a result, she returns to her old habits and patterns. She keeps sinning and doing things that are not healthy, and she realizes, ‘Oh my God, some of this is wrong,’ and so she again asks God to forgive her.

And as she asks God to forgive her, God cleanses her of the part above the iceberg and the part below the iceberg, which is completely forgiven.

Her life is getting better in some ways, but it seems like a long, hard road to walk.

What has she been missing in her life? She has asked for God’s forgiveness but has not asked Him to take back control of her life. This is why she still struggles with sin to a great degree. He is her

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savior, but not her Lord.

Eventually, she realizes she has been trying to live her life in the power of the flesh. As a result, when confronted with sin by the Holy Spirit, she gets down on her knees and says, “Lord, please forgive me of my sin. And I’m tired of running my own life by my power. Please take control of my life.”

She has now switched to the Dog Life—where Christ is on the throne. She may not realize it. She may not know what she has done, but she has now unleashed the power of the Holy Spirit in her life.

Now her life begins to change at a much faster pace. She begins to sin less. And she keeps on spiritually breathing (though she may not know the terminology.) Suddenly, people start looking at her life and say, “You have changed. You are different. You’re not the same person as before.”

And they are right. The Holy Spirit is keeping her in healthy fellowship with God.

But let’s say she remembers her abortion that happened in 2019. And she realizes that was so wrong. Does she have to confess that sin?

Hopefully you know the answer. The answer is “no.” It was already dealt with in the second part of John 1:9;

And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

It was forgiven in 2023 when she first confessed her sin to God.

I want to tell you that learning to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit is extremely important. Again, I have been practicing this for forty years. I repent. I spiritually breathe. I used to do it quite a bit. Now it is about once a week, twice a week. It doesn’t happen much because I am trying to live a life that is pleasing to God. He has done a deep work in me. But I still practice spiritual breathing regularly because as he “melts the iceberg” it keeps raising up and I see more sins that are wrong that I hadn’t realized before.

Book Six: J1, J2

If you were to walk down the road and see me, say, “Hey, Bob, what circle represents your life right now?”

I’m going to say, “Circle 2.”

Well, this is my answer for you. I told you it would be a short answer and a long answer. The long answer comes later in one of the books in the future. We’ll get to that much later.

Finding J1 and J2

But for now, I want you to search one more time for J1 and J2. Look at these three passages and figure out where they are.

#1: 1 John 3:23

And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he commanded us. (1 John 3:23)

J1- That we believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. That is salvation. That is what John writes. If you believe in him, you passed J1. You have got it.

J2- and love one another. That is the commandment he has given us. It is something we are to do. That is action-oriented.

#2: Acts 26:19-20

Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision but declared first to Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentile, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. (Acts 26:19-20)

J1- That they should repent and turn to God.

J2- Performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.

#3: Revelation 21:6-7

And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. The one who conquers will have this

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heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.”
(Revelations 21:6-7)

J1- To the thirsty, I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. You don't have to do anything. It is free.

J2- The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Let's Review

This chapter is brought about by a young woman who asked, “Mr. Sjogren, I have had an abortion. Is God going to hold me accountable for that?” In other words, will my sin be brought out at J2?

And the answer is no. If she has confessed her sin of abortion, it will never be brought up at J2. How does that happen? By living a lifestyle of repentance.

I hope that was helpful. I hope you are going to practice these three circles. They will change your life forever.

In the next chapter, we will be asking the question, “What is God looking for at J2?” In other words, what are the criteria for judging us at J2? If you knew what they were, it could change how you live today.

CHAPTER FOUR

What Criteria Will God Use to Judge Us at J2?

Knowing one day we will be standing before God on Judgment Day, we need to ask ourselves a significant question. What criteria will God use to judge us at J2? If we can figure that out, then we can work toward living a life that will hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

I want to suggest to you, men and women, that there are seven criteria God will use at J2; seven criteria He will use to look at our lives and make an assessment. Those criteria are;

1. Our motivation
2. Our faithfulness
3. Our wholehearted service
4. Our deeds
5. Our words
6. Our thoughts
7. Our opportunities

Let’s look at each of them and see what scripture backs it up. (Remember, if no scripture backs it up, it is simply someone’s opinion. Don’t base your theology simply on someone’s opinion—or on a worship song you heard.)

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1. Our Motivation

Men and women, you and I know there can be wrong motivations in serving Christ; even some pastors can have the wrong motivations. And the scriptures warn us about this. We find this in the book of Acts.

I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. (Acts 20:29-30)

Notice the motivation: to draw away the disciples after them. In today's terminology, we would translate that as "They want big churches. Many want mega-churches. And they want to be the person in charge of that kind of a church."

If you've seen Book 3 (Cat and Dog Theology), you'd instantly realize, "That's a cattish attitude." Deep down in their hearts, they say, "I want it all to be about me." Therefore, we have to ask, whose kingdom is this about? Is it about their kingdom, or is it about God's kingdom?

John writes about those who think it is about themselves. In 3 John 1:9-10 we read these words;

I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. (3 John 1:9)

These are pastors who want to put themselves first. Their quest is for power, not serving the King but serving themselves.

But John goes on...

So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church. (3 John 1:10)

The only person who can "put them out of the church" is the pastor. They are the ones leading the church. They are inside the church, keeping others out.

Book Six: J1, J2

When I see this in churches today, it is all about protecting their “theology.” They don’t want others to upset their kingdom; therefore, they position differing points of views as “heretics” to get others on their side and drive them out. (By “driving them out,” they are simply making things so bad for them that those with different views choose to go to another church.)

There are clearly pastors who are pastoring for their own kingdom. They are serving the advancement of their own self-image. They do it in the name of Jesus, but God sees right through them. Jesus warned us about this in the sermon on the mountain.

Be aware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them. For then you will have no rewards from your Father in heaven
(Matthew 6:1)

In this warning by Jesus, we can see that it applies not only to pastors but to Christians who are practicing righteousness to be seen and acknowledged by others. It’s not about God’s kingdom; it’s about their kingdom. Their motivation is entirely wrong.

Note that this means it is about our motivation. Paul talks about God analyzing our motivations.

Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)

Because each person will receive their commendation from God, this is talking about Judgment Day. God will look at the motivation of your heart and my heart. What were we living for? Was it for our kingdom or His kingdom?

Does the scripture give us any indication of what our motivation should be? Paul clearly distinguished what our motivation should be in his first letter to the Corinthians.

So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)

Do everything for the glory of God. But Paul goes beyond that.

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He also says that everything we do should be done in love.

Let all that you do, be done in love. (1 Corinthians 16:14)

And on top of those two, Jesus says we should do it to lay up treasures in heaven. That means working for rewards. Jesus commands us to do that... (Please read Book 5: *Grace versus Works* if you haven't already.)

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. (Matthew 6:20)

Here are at least three motivations. If I were to rate them, I would put them in this order.

- Do it for the glory of God.
- Do it in love
- Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

If this is what motivates you, you are on good ground. Keep living life this way.

2. Our Faithfulness

God's desire for us to be faithful has been expressed multiple times. But let's look at the key verse once again.

Moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful. (1 Corinthians 4:2)

If you want a positive assessment at J2, be faithful in living for the Lord. This isn't merely in the "Christian" thing you are supposed to do. It is a choice you make.

Choose to be faithful as an individual. Choose to be faithful as a husband. Choose to be faithful as a wife. Choose to be faithful as a child. Choose to be faithful in how you date. Choose to be faithful in your thought life. Choose to be faithful in your homework. Choose to be faithful at the office. Choose to be faithful in your parenting. Be faithful in every area of your life.

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In Luke 19, as God reviews how each servant did with their mina, we read these words;

And he said to him, "Well done, good servant. Because you have been faithful in a very little, you shall have authority over ten cities." (Luke 19:17)

Because of faithfulness, he got to rule over ten cities (Remember, there is a big difference between faith and faithfulness). Faithfulness is what God was looking for.

We see the same thing in Matthew 25:23

His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matthew 25:23)

It was their faithfulness that allowed them to be in charge over much.

We also see God's call to faithfulness in the book of Revelation. But this time, it is even unto death.

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into heaven, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

Why is God so worried about our faithfulness? He tells us in Luke's gospel.

One who is faithful in very little is also faithful in much.
And the who is dishonest in much is dishonest in much. (Luke 16:10)

Men and women, God has a kingdom He wants to give us as a bride, and He says, "I want to see how you are going to be faithful. If you are faithful on earth, I will give you many responsibilities in heaven. If you are not, I will give it to somebody else."

Faithfulness is a key part of what God will be looking for on Judgment Day.

3. Our wholehearted service to God.

Men and women, God doesn't want half-hearted service to God.

Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free (Ephesians 6:7-8)

Here, he is talking to slaves, saying, "I want you to serve your masters wholeheartedly." And note that Paul says this will show up on Judgment Day—"the Lord will reward each one...." We serve wholeheartedly because God rewards us for that.

Paul writes the same thing to the Colossians.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. (Colossians 3:23-24)

Whatever we do, we should do it for the Lord and do it with all our hearts. God doesn't want half hearted service to Himself.

God let us know thousands of years ago that He is looking for people who diligently seek Him with all their hearts.

For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him... (2 Chronicles 16:9a)

But God also knows that some people (and sometimes the entire people) will not seek Him with their whole hearts. We saw this in Israel as a nation—they got disciplined. God was hoping that Judah would learn a lesson. But they did not.

Yet for all this, her treacherous sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but in pretense, declares the LORD. (2 Chronicles 3:10)

God wants wholehearted service. Why would God trust His whole family business to someone who wasn't fully committed?

That doesn't make any sense. If you are not fully committed on earth, why should He give you a place in His family business to rule and reign forever? He is not going to. He wants wholehearted service to Himself, of which the merits of such commitment will be assessed on Judgment Day.

4. Our Deeds

What we do is very important to God as well. We find this in our key text of 2 Corinthians 5:10 where Paul lets the Corinthians know that we will all be judged.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. (2 Corinthians 5:10)

“Done in the body”—those are deeds. Remember, J2 is all about rewards. J1 is about our faith. This is completely in the context of the second judgment. Hence, he is looking at our deeds.

We also see this in some of Jesus' last words recorded in the Bible.

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.
(Revelation 22:12)

Please notice that it doesn't say, “to repay each one according to his theology.” You don't get rewarded *for your theology*.

Notice that it also doesn't say; Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one *for how many times he attended church*. No, it is not what it says.

What does it say?

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done.
(Revelation 22:12)

God is going to reward our deeds. He is looking to see what kind of rewards we are going to have. Did we feed that homeless person? Did we help our neighbor? Did we love on those little

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children? Did we visit people in prison? Did we invite strangers in?

Matthew records the same thing.

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. (Matthew 16:27)

He is coming again, and then He will reward us for what we have done. This is not about J1. He is talking about J2—works.

Men and women, this is not a New Testament phenomenon. You will find it all through the Old Testament as well.

“I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” (Jeremiah 17:10)

And that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work. (Psalm 62:12)

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed. (Proverbs 19:17)

Tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds. (Isaiah 3:10)

It’s in the Old Testament. It’s in the New Testament. Mark it down well in your minds. God rewards us for our deeds.

5. Our words

You may have heard the phrase, *“Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”* Unfortunately, it’s a lie. I assume you know that by now.

My deepest hurt came from words spoken by my spiritual father. Words can hurt deeply. This is why Paul wrote these words to the church at Ephesus.

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth, but only such as is good for building up, as the occasion, that it

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may give grace to those who hear. (Ephesians 4:29)

God says in His word, “I want you to build people up. I want you to encourage them, to strengthen them, and to make them more like me with your words.”

We will be held accountable for our words.

“I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words, you will be condemned.” (Matthew 12:36-37)

He says, “You are going to be accountable for your positive words, and you will be held accountable for your careless words (unless you confess them).”

Even the words we say that we think are private. God says, “No, I’m listening to those as well, and you’ll be held accountable for them too.”

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. (Luke 12:2-3)

This verse makes me conscious of what I say in private to others. I know that it is not really private. On Judgment Day, it will be made public.

Whoever guards his mouth preserves his life; he who opens wide his lips comes to ruin. (Proverbs 13:3)

By watching what you say, you are “preserving your life.” This doesn’t mean you are going to heaven. It means that the quality of your eternal life (ruling and reigning with Christ) will be preserved.

Now, if you’re walking with the Lord and you’ve said hurtful words in the past—yet you’ve confessed them, they will never be brought up at J2. Live a lifestyle of repentance. Ask people for forgiveness; it won’t be brought up at J2. But all *unconfessed* words will be judged.

6. Our thoughts

We have come to understand that God is going to scrutinize our motivations, but the writer of Hebrews takes it one step further.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of the soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

God is going to look at our thoughts, and mind you, the word of God is like a sword; it will cut right through our souls and spirit. And as it does that, whatever is there will be exposed.

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (Hebrew 4:13)

The words “give account” is referencing Judgment Day. It is the same in Luke, “Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, *in order to find out what they had gained with it*” — Luke 19:15.

Paul is saying the same basic thing to the church in Rome.

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. (Romans 2:14-16)

He is going to judge the secrets of men. He will judge our inner thoughts, the inner mind inside of our minds. Men and women, our goal should be perfection.

This perfection means “everything...”

We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God and take every thought captive to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:5)

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But Paul doesn't just tell us about what we can't do. He tells us what we *can* think about—especially if we are trying to take every thought captive.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)

Dear reader, God is going to judge our thoughts. He even told us what He wants us to think about. Think about the good things. Focus on them.

Now, we are never going to reach that perfection here on this earth. We just need to keep confessing, living a lifestyle of repentance-exhale, and then inhale-give God control. If we practice the spiritual breathing, none of our sins will be brought up at J2.

7. Our opportunities

Because Christ has nailed our sins to the cross, you and I have freedom. And with freedom comes choices (See Book 4, Chapter 6). These choices can also reflect how we choose to live for God out of our own free will!

I love a passage about Jonathan in the Old Testament. Jonathan is with his armor bearer and says, “Hey, let's go check out this Philistine camp and let's see what God does.”

There is no hint in the text that this is what God wanted him to do. It seems as if he is doing this on his own—especially since his father didn't even know where he was.

We find it in 1 Samuel.

One day Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over the Philistine garrison on the other side.” But he did not tell his father. (1 Samuel 14:1)

Jonathan later talks to his armor bearer who God may or may not do.

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Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, “Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few. (1 Samuel 14:6)

Because Jonathan says the words, “It may be...” it clearly communicates to me that he didn’t know what would happen. Jonathan was unsure whether or not God would give him favor and victory or he would be defeated. Regardless of his uncertainty, he still said, “Let’s go do this for God.”

Jonathan took a step of faith for God. This is what I like to do with my life. In my 65 years of living, God has only spoken to me (never in voice form, just strong leading) twice. And one of those was not marrying Debby—one of the best choices I ever made.

Much of my life, I have walked by faith. But what I do, I do to make God famous. They may be steps of faith for him, but I do them none-the-less. Like Jonathan, I ask, “Let’s see what God will do.” Therefore, I do create opportunities that I believe God will be pleased with.

This is what God is looking for.

Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. (Titus 2:14)

Men and women, I believe God said, “Hey, do you want to do good works for me? Let’s see, what you got. Show me.”

Sometimes, He has specific things for us to do. Sometimes He says, “I have given you a lot of opportunities; let me see what you can do. I’ve given you free will; will you use it for the glory of my kingdom or your kingdom?”

Not only should we be taking up opportunities to do good work, but we should be challenging others to do the same.

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works. (Hebrews 10:24)

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Let me encourage you to take steps of faith and go make God famous today. Do something radical, whether you've heard God or not. Show what you've got to God!

Conclusion

I believe that there are going to be seven criteria that God will use to judge us;

1. Our motivation
2. Our faithfulness
3. Our wholehearted service
4. Our deeds
5. Our words
6. Our thoughts
7. Our opportunities

May we pass Judgment Day with flying colors!

Finding J1 and J2

Okay, we are not going to look for Waldo; but the J's. We have got three passages to find the Js;

#1: Romans 7:4

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. (Romans 7:4)

J1- You also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead.

J2- In order that we may bear fruit for God.

#2: Hebrews 10:14

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For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. (Hebrews 10:14)

J1-*For by a single offering he has perfected for all time*; note the past tense. We are completely clean.

J2-Those who are being sanctified, it's a process of becoming holy.

#3: 2 Timothy 2:10

Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. (2 Timothy 2:10)

J1- That they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

J2-with eternal glory (These are rewards).

In the next chapter, we will discuss what Paul did *not* know about the recipients he wrote to. As a result, he wrote in a certain way. Welcome to “subjunctive verbs!”

CHAPTER FIVE

Subjunctive Verbs

Did you know there was something the Apostle Paul didn't know about the people in the churches he was writing to? As a result, he wrote using a very specific form of a verb that changes everything in how you read the scriptures.

To find out what it is, we need to review what it means to be free in Christ.

We found out in Colossians 1:13-14 that our sin was nailed to the cross by Christ. The debt that was held against us was paid in full. We didn't do anything to earn it; we can't do anything to lose it (take the nail out). You and I are completely free.

But we discovered that with freedom comes choices, and we have to choose whether or not we want the wide-easy gate or narrow-hard gate. (Read Book 4, Chapter 6 on choices.) They both are options for each believer

And Paul wasn't sure what future Christians were going to choose. If they chose the hard gate, they would get huge rewards. If they chose the wide gate, they would get few rewards—and end up living a very dysfunctional life.

It would only be until they finished strong that he would know. In fact, he did not know whether he was going to get a full reward. We know that because of what he wrote to the Corinthians.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but

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only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Paul knew that there was a possibility of being disqualified himself. What does “disqualification” mean? Was he worried about going to hell? No, that is not what he was worried about.

Paul wasn’t worried about going to hell. When he referenced hell, he constantly wrote in such a way that it was a “done deal” by writing in the past tense about his eternal security (and other’s).

He was worried about whether he was going to get his full rewards. Was he going to be as intimate and as close to Jesus as he could have been due to having finished well?

Not sure about himself, he also wasn’t sure if his converts would choose well. Would they choose the narrow gate? Would they finish strong?

Subjunctive Verbs

Because of all of this, he used a type of verb that is hard to decipher in English. My journey to discovering this began in reading through the book of Titus.

So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7)

Becoming heirs means getting your full reward. But he says, ‘might.’

I was looking at that verse and thought to myself, “Might!” Why doesn’t he say, “*Will* become heirs?”

So, I began to search the Greek meaning of the word “might.” Guess what? It wasn’t there. I personally use the ESV (which is supposed to be the most accurate word-for-word translation). So, I thought, “Is this a bad translation?”

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So, I went to *BlueLetterBible.org* to look it up in its Greek meaning. I found the verb “become” and it can be translated as:

to become, to come into existence, to begin to be, to receive being, to become, to become to pass, happen of events, to arise, appear in history, come upon the stage of men appearing in public, to be made finish, miracles performed, to be made.

I noticed there was nothing related to the concept of “might.”

Perplexed, I scratched my head and did the only thing I could think of doing. I called my son-in-law. My son-in-law was taking Greek at the time, so I thought he would be a good source.

I said, “Chris, where can I find the Greek meaning of the word ‘*might*’ in of Titus 3:7?”

So, he took his Greek Bible and looked it up, but he didn’t find the word “might” either. He then told me he’d do some research and call me later.

A few hours later, he called and said, “Okay, Bob, I got your answer.”

I said, “Great, what’s the answer?”

He said, “It is a subjunctive verb.”

I said, “Wonderful. What is a subjunctive verb?”

He explained, “Words have different moods.”

I said, “Are they moody?”

He laughed and said, “No, not in that way. There are three different verb moods. Verbs can have three different moods. Those moods are determined by a few Greek letters at the end of the verb.”

So, he taught me the three moods of a verb.

The first mood a verb could have is called the *indicative*. The indicative is making a statement. In other words, if I were to say,

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“God has rewards for you.” This is a statement. It is one hundred percent certain. God has rewards for you. There is nothing ambivalent in it; it’s a statement.

The second mood a verb could have is called the *imperative*. That gives a command or suggestions. In light of our little example here, it would look like this: “Work for the rewards God has for you.” That’s a command. Do the work.

The third mood a verb can have is called the *subjunctive*. That’s the one that we are talking about. A subjunctive verb is a verb that expresses *a wish or possibility*.

So, in light of the example we are using, it’s, “I hope you get the rewards God has for you.” In this example, it is kind of sitting there with your fingers crossed, “I hope this happens.” That’s a subjunctive verb. It is defined as this;

the action described may or may not occur depending on circumstances.

After hearing Chris, I went back to Titus 3:7.

So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7)

Notice that in the first half of the verse, Paul is one hundred percent sure about J1. He uses the past tense (being justified) in light of getting to heaven. Afterward, he switches.

He is no longer one hundred percent sure as to whether or not they are going to finish strong. He doesn’t know what gate they are going to choose. So, he uses a subjunctive verb.

He is saying, “Now that you’re saved, you might (or might not) become an heir (get your full rewards). It all depends on how you live your life on this earth and whether or not you finish strong.”

Men and women, Paul did not know which way his new converts were going to choose, the wide gate or the narrow gate (Mathew 7:13-14). Because of that, he used a subjunctive verb; that we *might* become heir. Paul



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was kind of holding his fingers; “I hope you do this; I hope you become heirs.” But he wasn’t one hundred percent sure.

That is why he goes on to the very next verse Titus 3:8;

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people. (Titus 3:8)

He wants them to insist on good works. Why? Because he wants people to get their full rewards. He wants them to be a part of the bride of Christ, and they can only do that through good works.

He explains what they are to insist on. That those who have believed (notice, J1, and in past tense) may be careful (subjunctive) to devote to good works.

Paul’s goal was for everyone to become a part of the bride. Invariably, you become a part of the Bride by doing good works.

No wonder he finishes the verse by saying, “These things are excellent and profitable for people.” How is it profitable? They will profit by becoming a part of the bride!

My paraphrase of this passage would look like this: “I hope you will get your full rewards. But, to ensure that you will, I want to encourage you to do good works. If you do good works, you are going to get your full rewards. Choose wisely.”

They Are Everywhere

All of a sudden, I began to find subjunctive verbs everywhere! (You can go to blue letter Bible-“Contact Us” or “Send Us a Request” and say, please send me all the subjunctive verbs in the New Testament, and they will get back to you within a few hours.) Let’s go over a simple one in Ephesians.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we

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should walk in them in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

He uses a subjunctive verb; when he talks about walking in them. He says, “You have been saved (note the past tense) through faith. However, that is not the question. You were not only saved *from* something, but you were also saved *for* something. You were saved for good works, and I hope you do them. I hope Christ is your Lord and not just your Savior.”

Being unsure about what they would do, he used a subjunctive verb. It may or may not happen. It depends upon how they choose to use their free will.

Let’s go to another subjunctive verb found in Romans.

We were buried therefore with him I baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4.)

Note the past tense and Paul’s understanding of eternal security: we were buried. Paul had no doubts as to whether or not they were believers. However, he did question what gate they would choose. Hence, he uses a subjunctive verb: we, too, *might* walk in the newness of life.

Paul is saying, “I want you to walk in the newness of life. He died for you, and you have been saved. Now you have got a choice; please use it to walk in the newness of life. I want you to get your full rewards. I want to present you (at J2) in your total maturity (Colossians 1:28). I’m keeping my fingers crossed.”

Another one is in Romans 7:4

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. (Romans 7:4)

Paul says, “We *may* bear fruit for God!” He uses a subjunctive verb because it is not guaranteed. He was sure about J1 (you also have died—past tense), but he wasn’t sure about J2. Paul is

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keeping his fingers crossed.

If you remember, the scriptures teach that not everyone bears fruit for God. And this is backed up by John in what we have already studied.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away... (John 15:2a)

The words “in me” signify that this is a believer. Paul talks about that in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If any man is *in Christ*, he is a new creation.” A branch that is “in me” is a new creation—only a believer can be in Christ.

But this branch does not bear fruit.

This means that there are Christians who do not bear fruit. Why wouldn't some Christians bear fruit? Because they are making bad choices. They have chosen the wide gate and not the narrow gate. We all have free will and can make bad choices.

Peter also talks about the possibility that some Christians do not bear fruit.

For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

These are believers who are ineffective and unfruitful. Some Christians don't walk with God. Knowing this, Paul wrote a statement using a subjunctive verb; “*that we may bear fruit for God.*”

He is keeping his fingers crossed.

In his letter to the Corinthians, he writes in the same way.

And he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. (2 Corinthians 5:15)

“*Might no longer live*” is the subjunctive verb. What is Paul saying? Some people choose to live for themselves even though they are believers. They choose the broad wide way. They don't

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want the small narrow gate. They don't want persecution. They don't want life to be tough. (What they don't realize is that their life will be very dysfunctional.)

Paul knows some people are going to choose that. As a result, he used the subjunctive verb. He is keeping his fingers crossed.

Men and women, we have the power of the Holy Spirit. He has given us everything we need to live a life of godliness and holiness (2 Peter 1:3,4), but we may not choose to call upon that power. Remember, we can ask for forgiveness of sin but not give Him control over our lives.

Paul writes in the same manner to the Thessalonians. He is sure they are saved, but he is unsure if they will obtain the full glory God wants for them in Christ Jesus.

But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord because God chose you as the first fruits to be saved, through sanctification by the spirit and belief in the truth. To this, he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:13-24)

When Jesus was transfigured on the Mount of Olives, He shone like the sun. He was being revealed in glory. We, too, shall shine like the sun (Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father –Matthew 13:43). That is our destiny.

But Paul knows that not all believers will appear before God at J2 and be holy and blameless. That is why he used a subjunctive verb. Some believers shine like the sun, some shine like the moon, and others like the stars. (Read Book 5, Chapter 5.) You may not get the full glory of the Lord; it is up to you; it is your choice and how you live—and how you shine forever.

Peter also knew it wasn't a guarantee that all believers would get their full reward to rule and reign with Christ. In fact, he knew some people wouldn't call upon the power of the Holy Spirit; hence, they would live powerless lives. That's why he, too, used a subjunctive verb.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of

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him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2Peter 1:3-4)

Though we all have the Holy Spirit once we give our lives to Christ, that doesn't necessarily mean that we will call upon that power. We can have him as our Savior, but not our Lord. He can be *in* our life but *not on the throne of our lives*.

So, Peter used a subjunctive verb: “*may* become partakers of the divine nature...”

He is saying, “Yes, it’s iffy. Listen, I want you to live this kind of life. I want you to say goodbye to your old life and ‘hello’ to a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. I want you to put Christ on the throne of your life as you to yield to him. Give the dysfunctional life. Live a life full of purpose and meaning.”

But he says, “It’s not guaranteed, so it is best I use a subjunctive verb.”

J1 Guaranteed

All the verses we have looked at; encompass J1 and J2, but I want to remind you of something. When he uses J1, he is *one hundred percent sure* of your salvation. He uses the past tense. But when it concerns J2, he says, “No, this is iffy,” hence uses a subjunctive verb.

Let’s go over them quickly;

So that being justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7)

J1- “Justified”—past tense; it’s a done deal one hundred percent you are going to heaven; you passed J1.

J2- “We might become heirs.” That is iffy. It depends on how you live your life.

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For by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not of your own doing, it is a gift of God. Not as a result of works so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.(Ephesians 2:8-10)

J1- “For by grace you have been saved”-past tense; one hundred percent guaranteed.

J2- “Should walk in them,” that’s the iffy part.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)

J1- “We were buried”-past tense; one hundred percent guaranteed.

J2- “We too might walk.” That’s iffy.

Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God. (Romans 7:4)

J1- “You also have died”-past tense; one hundred percent guaranteed you passed J1 with no problem.

J2- “May bear fruit for God” It depends on how you make choices in your life.

To this, he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thessalonians 2:14)

J1- “He called”-past tense; one hundred percent guaranteed your salvation.

J2- “That you may obtain the glory of the Lord.” That’s iffy. It depends upon how you live your life.

Paul and Peter put J1 and J2 together because they knew we

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would all be judged. They were absolutely sure about J1; hence they used the past tense. But in light of their rewards, they were not sure. So, they use subjunctive verbs for the action they want to see believers take.

Finding J1 and J2

Let's look for the J's. in these three new passages.

#1: 1Peter 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:19)

J1-Entrust their souls

J2- While doing good

#2: Romans 6:10

For the death, he died to sin, once and for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. (Romans 6:10)

J1-For the death, he died to sin.

J2-The life he lives, he lives to God (living for the glory of God.) This is referencing Jesus. But remember, he is our example. (See Revelation 3:21b.)

#3: Psalms 78:6-7

That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and raised and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and but forget the works of God, but keep his commandments. (Psalms 78:6-7)

J1-So that they should set their hope in God.

J2-Keep his commandments.

I hope you can identify the Js in these passages and that, in your quiet times, you can decipher between J1 and J2. May they pop up everywhere for you!

Let's Review

The writers of the New Testament weren't sure whether Christians in the future were going to choose to live for God or to live for themselves. Hence, they chose to use subjunctive verbs.

A subjunctive verb is an action that may or may not occur depending on certain circumstances. "Circumstances" in this context imply knowing whether or not they are going to choose to go through the wide gate or the narrow gate—knowing how they will use their free will.

But whenever J1 was referred to, there was one hundred percent certainty. We are guaranteed salvation.

I hope you realize what this means. Men and women, we have choices to make. Are we going to yield to God? Are we going to give Him control of our lives? Are we going to seek to go out and do good work to make God famous? Or are we going to live a safe, soft, comfortable, easy Christian life, just go to church, avoid rocking the boat, and live for ourselves in a Christian context? We have a choice.

But...

There are places in the New Testament where it *does give* one hundred percent certainty about rewards. You are definitely going to get them!

Though it seems to contradict everything we have been taught in this chapter, it doesn't. Turn the page and find out why!

CHAPTER SIX

Where the New Testament Gives One Hundred Percent Certainty About Rewards

The subjunctive verb sheds much light on the fact that we have options concerning how we live the Christian life. Paul (along with other writers) wasn't sure about the outcome of our choices in life.

Yet there are places where the New Testament gives one hundred percent certainty about rewards. In other words, rewards are guaranteed. How can the scriptures, on the one hand, say we are not guaranteed rewards but, on the other hand, say the exact opposite?

Hmmm, it seems like another contradiction. But it's not. That's what this chapter is all about.

Remember, Paul wasn't even certain about his own rewards.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Paul was worried about being disqualified. He wasn't worried

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about going to hell. That wasn't the question. He was worried about whether or not he would get his full rewards.

But there are places where Paul is one hundred percent certain that he will get rewards. We find it in his letter to Timothy.

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
(2Timothy 4:6-8)

Paul was guaranteed it would happen based on his choice of words, "will award to me."

So, on the one hand, he says, "I hope I am not disqualified," and on the other hand, he says, "I am guaranteed to get it." How do these two passages make sense?

Well, they make sense because of the context of each passage. You see, in the passage where he is guaranteed, he was at the end of his earthly life. We see this in his words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Note the past tense; he is done fighting; he has finished the race; he has kept the faith.

Because he is at the end of his life, knowing he is finishing strong, he is one hundred sure. Therefore he says, "I am guaranteed these rewards."

Unfortunately, not all Christians finish strong.

I have a pastor who is a friend, a phenomenon preacher who did a great job at pastoring his church. But he got dissatisfied with his wife in his late forties and early fifties. In his work, he was counseling a woman and ended up having an affair with her.

He lost his entire ministry; he lost everything. He divorced, remarried the woman, and is no longer in ministry. He didn't finish strong. The reality of the Christian life is that not everyone finishes strong.

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Because Paul was not assured as to whether or not he was going to finish strong, in the first passage, he writes, “I hope I am not disqualified.” But at the end of his earthly life, he writes, “I am guaranteed these rewards.”

This idea of certainty is found in various parts of the Bible. In the book of James, we find the same thing.

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)

When he says, “He *will* receive the crown,” he is saying, “It is guaranteed.” But note the context;

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test.... (James 1:12a)

The word “when” means it is conditional. You have to remain steadfast under trial. You have to stand the test. If you stand the test, then you receive the crown of life. This is very conditional.

Pay attention to the last few words in that scripture: “To those who love him.” Where have we heard that before? Oh yes, in the book of John.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.
(John 14:15)

Loving God is a conditional statement. He says, “If you love me, you have got to keep my commandments.” If you love Him and keep His commandments, you will get rewarded. It all fits together. That’s why in the original passage that we’re looking at of James 1:12, James understood rewards and how conditional it was.

Peter wrote about it as well.

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that it is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but

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willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Peter 5:1-4)

Peter is encouraging pastors and elders. These were the people in charge of the church at that time. He is saying to those leaders, “If you do these things, you *will* receive rewards (the unfading crown of glory).”

Peter also wrote about the guarantee of rewards in his second book. He writes in his first chapter about how we are to live in the power of the Holy Spirit. In that power, we are to add many qualities to our lives. In the event that we do such, we will gain a “rich welcome” into heaven. “Rich welcome” is code for “great rewards.”

He starts off this way.

“His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence. (2 Peter 1:3)

We have the Holy Spirit inside us; hopefully, He is on the throne of our lives. If He is on the throne, He gives us all the power to live that life. But it is a choice we make to give Him Lordship over us.

He then continues on about adding to our faith.

By which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge. (2 Peter 1:4-5)

The words “make every effort” sounds challenging. Truly, it is challenging; doing good works can be challenging. It is a fight; however, if we want what God has planned for us, we have to walk through the battle.

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He continues with what we have to add.

And knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:6-8)

Note the word “if.” That means all of this is conditional. He’s not sure we are going to do it because we have free will. We have a choice to make.

Now notice what is implied with this conditional statement. If we don’t do these things, we will be ineffective and unfruitful. We will be those Christians who don’t bear fruit.

He goes on;

For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. (2 Peter 1:9)

The words “was cleansed” is in reference to J1. He is one hundred percent sure that they are believers. (And yes, of course, he’s writing to the church, and that makes sense.) That is why he uses the past tense, “was cleansed.”

The question is not whether or not you are a believer. You have already surpassed J1, therefore, you are clean. The question is whether you are going to make good choices to do all these things. It’s questionable because it is hard work. Therefore, the entire statement is conditional.

He goes on;

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

If we practice these qualities, it means we are never going to fall. Does this mean we are never going to sin? No, that is not what he is saying. All Christians fall; however, we get back up. That is the

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beauty found in the Proverbs;

For the righteous fall seven times and rise again...
(Proverbs 24:16^a)

We, believers, may fall on our faces, but we rise. When we fall, we can ask the Holy Spirit to take back control of our lives. As we confess our sins, we give Him back control.

Remember, it is called spiritual breathing; exhale-confess, inhale-ask him to fill you. That is going from the Cat Circle to the Dog Circle of putting Him back on the throne of your life.

Then Peter finishes it out.

For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:11)

Peter's words, "there will be," makes it sound guaranteed. Truly, it is! "Richly provided" is the biblical term for great rewards. He's saying, "If you do all of these things, you are guaranteed a rich reward in heaven." But you have to do all of these things in order to get those rich rewards. It is conditional.

Matthew also has text that shows rewards are guaranteed based on how we live our lives.

Then the King will say to those on his right, "Come you who are blessed by Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
(Matthew 25:34)

"Inherit the kingdom" sounds one hundred percent guaranteed. And it is! When he separates the sheep from the goats, he guarantees the sheep the kingdom (code for great rewards.) Why are they guaranteed the kingdom? Well, let's read the next verse;

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. (Matthew 25:35)

They are guaranteed to inherit the kingdom based on good works, and because they did these good works, they are guaranteed

a rich reward.

Any time rewards are guaranteed, it is always in the context of being at the end of their lives having done good works. Or it is teaching that says, “If you live a life full of good works, you will be guaranteed a rich reward.”

Let’s Review

In the context of works, the Bible guarantees the possibility of rewards for men and women. But Peter, Paul, and others didn’t know the future. They couldn’t read the minds of those they were writing to, so they kept using subjunctive verbs when they spoke about rewards to communicate that it was a possibility.

But rewards *are guaranteed* in other areas where they have already finished strong or where they are saying to do these things so you can finish strong.

This is why in some passages of the Bible, writers will say, “I hope I get it.” And in other passages of the Bible, they say, “It is guaranteed.” It’s all a matter of context.

Finding J1 and J2

Well, we are not searching for Waldo; we are searching for the J’s- J1 and J2. We have got three passages for you to look at. Let’s begin with the first.

#1: Colossians 1:3-4

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints. (Colossians 1:3-4)

J1-Since we heard of your faith in Christ (guaranteed relationship).

J2-And of the love that you have for all the saints; loving others is action. That is doing things—for God so loved the world *that He gave*; that is action. That is what is going to be considered during J2.

#2: Nehemiah 1:5

And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and

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awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments. (Nehemiah 1:5)

J1-God who keeps the covenant.

J2-Steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.

#3: Psalm 111:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! (Psalm 111:10)

J1-The fear of the LORD; fearing God. God, I fear you; I trust and put my hand, my life, and my sin on you, Lord. Take away my sin; I need a savior.

J2-All those who practice it have a good understanding. Practicing it; good understanding; if you are doing good works, you are very wise. You will be rewarded eternally.

In the next chapter, we are going to ask a very simple question. Should the church be more focused on J1 or J2?

What do you think? Give it some thought before you turn the page.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Should the Church Focus on J1 or J2?

Should the church be more focused on J1 or J2? Answering this question is the purpose of this chapter.

In Chapter two, I talked to you about sitting down with my pastor (at the church that I was attending at the time) and going over the concepts of J1 and J2 with him. They were very new to him, but he was very intrigued and he liked what he heard. However, at the end of our time together, he asked the most significant question he could have asked.

He asked, “Bob, should the church be more focused on J1 or J2?”

I asked him if he believed in predestination. He answered that he did. I then replied, “Well, if that’s the case, it should probably be more about J2.”

I’m not sure if he liked the answer or not. But one thing was for sure, his sermons never changed. He remained focused on J1 for the majority of his ministry.

I was speaking to another pastor of a different church, and the same concept came up. But this time, it came about in a different form. He said these words, “I can tell you what the Bible is primarily about.”

I said, “Oh, yes. What is that?”

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He said, “Saving people from hell.”

He was focused entirely on J1. He thought the Bible was primarily about saving people from hell. For various reasons, we got on to another topic immediately, so I never got to address his primary focus.

But men and women, I want to lovingly disagree with this last pastor’s statement. I will say plainly that the Bible is *not* primarily about saving people from hell. Where do we get that from?

We get it from Paul’s letter to Timothy and Paul’s understanding of why the Scriptures are inspired.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2Timothy 3:16-17)

The first thing we must notice is the word “All.” “All scripture is breathed out by God.” From Genesis to Revelation, God has inspired every letter found in His word. And “all” of the text is for teaching, reproof, correction, and for training in righteousness.

Interestingly, there’s a purpose as to why all the text is inspired. What is the purpose?

Now, what it doesn’t say speaks volumes. It doesn’t say, “so that people don’t go to hell.” It would be a perfect place for it to say that. But it doesn’t.

This tells you right away that *the primary purpose of the scriptures is not to save people from hell*. If it was, Paul would have said it right there.

So, what does it say?

That the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:17)

Paul’s word “complete,” can be accurately translated as perfect. In other words, he does want us to stay as babies. He wants us to mature so we can become a part of the bride (though this is insinuated from the entire Word of God, not just from this

passage).

Then he says, “Equipped for every good work!” That’s works oriented. Works are what is going to be judged at J2, not faith. And Paul says that the entire Bible is geared toward getting you to do good works. It is gearing you up to be well rewarded on Judgment Day (J2).

Dear reader, the Bible is primarily concerned about J2. It is primarily worried about how you are presented to God at J2, and on that day, it’s genuinely interested in you being as holy and blameless, full of good works. It points us in this direction because God is looking for a bride for His son. Being a part of the Bride is what God ultimately wants for you.

But notice that it is not guaranteed. Paul uses a subjunctive verb when he says, “may be complete.” This is God’s ultimate goal for you, but Paul realizes that some people may not attain it.

In our previous chapters, we have read about the idea of being mature and complete in the apostle Paul’s letter to the Colossians.

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. (Colossians 1:28)

Paul said, “My goal is to make you mature.” When he speaks about “presenting them,” in their total maturity in Christ, he’s not referencing J1. He knows Jesus’ words that they’ve already passed out of J1 (John 5:24.). He is referencing J2. He wants to present them at the second judgment as mature believers in Christ.

Doing Good

Men and women, this is why the Bible highlights good works over and over again. That is why the Bible is full of works. The works reference J2.

Look at Psalm 37:3

Trust in the LORD, and do good; dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness. (Psalm 37:3)

“Do good”—that’s works oriented. Even in the Old Testament,

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God wants you to do good; that is His goal. Why? He is looking for a bride for His Son. He wants to see people who show themselves to be mature by doing good.

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. (Acts 10:38)

Jesus Christ, our example, went about doing good. It's what we were created for. It's what God wants you to do.

What can you do that is good today? What can you do tonight? What can you do tomorrow? What can you do at work? What can you do at school? What can you do for your friend?

What can you do that is good? That is what God wants from us. He wants us to do good.

So then, as we have an opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are to the household of faith. (Galatians 6:10)

Paul told the Galatians that, as they had the opportunity, they were to do good to everyone—especially to fellow believers. Remember, doing good does not get you into heaven; it rewards you and helps you become a part of the bride. So, Paul was always encouraging it.

Jesus commands it himself.

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your rewards will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. (Luke 6:35)

Of course, you can see Jesus' link to doing good and rewards. If we do good, we will get rewards. Jesus taught that. We should not only believe it but act on it.

The writer of Hebrews shares the same thoughts.

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you

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have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.
(Hebrews 13:16)

Do not neglect to do good; do good things. Note that it is a sacrifice. It's not going to be easy. But it will be pleasing to God. What could be more rewarding than seeing a smile on God's face when He looks down at us?

Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. (1 Peter 3:11)

Peter doesn't stop us from simply turning away from evil. God just doesn't want you in "sin management." He goes to the next step. He says, "We are to do good." Our goal is to make God look good with what we do!

The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people.
(Titus 3:8)

Not only are we supposed to do good works, but *we've got to be careful and devoted* to do good works. That sounds pretty serious. It is. God wants us to be careful to do good works. He wants this because He is looking for a bride for His Son, and that is what His ultimate goal for us has been all along.

Paul says, "This is profitable." Becoming a part of the Bride is absolutely profitable. You will get to rule and reign with Christ forever. You'll be far closer to him emotionally. That is extremely profitable; therefore, devote yourselves to and be careful to do good works.

Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.
(Titus 2:14)

Christ died on the cross so that you and I would be zealous for good works! That is a huge purpose statement. His sacrifice and death give us direction in life. It gives us purpose, and it has nothing to do with J1. It is all about J2.

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Do you wake up in the morning and say, “I want to do something good? I’m zealous to do good.” That is what God wants from us. That is what He is hoping for in us, that we would be zealous for good works.

Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (James 1:27)

Visiting orphans and widows in their affliction sounds like doing good. Yes, it is a good way to start doing good works. This is what true religion is all about; doing good things.

Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. (3 John 1:11)

John saw that those who do good are from God.

As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share. (1 Timothy 6:17-18)

In this passage, Paul writes to those who have money, and he says, “Hey, tell the rich people these things. They are to do good, to be rich in good works.” Doing good works is a big part of the Christian life.

Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. (1 Peter 4:19)

Even in the context of suffering, God wants you to do good. Yes, that is what He is saying. He wants you to get a positive resume (Book 1, Chapter 6). He wants you to build up your resume for J2. Men and women, this is what life is all about; work at it. Devote yourself, be zealous, be careful, and do good works.

Work Ideas

If God consistently points us to do good works, what kind of

good works are there to do?

Steve Sjogren (unrelated to me) authored a book called, *“Changing the World Through Kindness.”* He says, “You need to randomly go out as a church and do random acts of kindness.”

That would build God’s reputation up and draw people to your church. So, he has a whole ministry towards this. We wrote many of his ideas in our Bible curriculum for middle schoolers. Let’s go over a couple of them quickly.

• **Fruit Giveaway**

He writes, ‘I’m surprised at the popularity of this one. People like fresh fruit, and they would readily get it. I have tried this one in the USA, and it’s done great guns; an orange, an apple, and a banana are enough, along with a connection card in a clear plastic bag. It works well door to door. A connection card. Putting a card in there with your church’s name on it, times of services, and where it is located. They can say, “Wow, what is this church? Who does these good deeds? I want to go get to know them.”

• **Raking Leaves**

We came, we saw, we raked. Several people in a small group can rake an entire neighborhood on a single Saturday morning. Maybe you don’t like raking your yard, but when you are with a group of friends serving in the name of Christ, a chore becomes a joy. Many yards take only 15-20 minutes to polish off. What a great idea! Grab some people and go rake leaves for the glory of God to make him famous.

• **Messy Kitchen Clean Up**

Some who have been sick or depressed might need a good kitchen cleanup. Don’t try this by yourself. Two or three can clean a super dirty kitchen on Saturday morning.

• **Lawn Mowing**

Several mowers make mowing the lawn short work. Look for long grass, knock on the door, and go for it.

• Changing Light Bulbs

Sounds simple, but for some, reaching out to a 9ft ceiling is a difficult chore. Replace burned-out ones. Knock on elderly doors and see if there is a need.

Men and women, I encourage you to get this book, *“Changing the World Through Kindness.”* He has numerous creative ideas in there, practical everyday things you can do, doing good things that make God famous, and glorifying Him.

Men and women, good works permeate the scriptures. Why? Because it is primarily about J2. Remember, we have already passed out of J1. The focus is now on J2.

The Church's Focus

This chapter is all about the question, “Should the church be more focused on J1 or J2?” Let me give you a scenario of what I see usually happening at the average church in America.

When you first arrive, most worship songs on a Sunday morning are focused on J1. Lyrics like, “He took away my sin, he takes away my shame, he will move the mountain, he will break my chain.” These are all excellent songs. However, they are primarily focused on what God is doing for us. It is pretty much about J1.

These songs are not incorrect; they are incomplete. So, for the first 15 minutes or so, the focus is on J1.

Then, most messages are about having a better life. These messages are not about gaining great rewards. It is so that the people who attend the church might live a better life.

Also, ninety-five percent of the time, the closing song is focused on the J1. They walk away thinking it is all about them.

My wife brought up a phenomenon question when reviewing the material from which I teach; by asking this question, “When ninety-five percent of your Sunday audience is saved, why would you want to focus on J1?”

I thought that was a great way of phrasing it. If most people have

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a relationship with God, should you focus more on J1 or J2? We are trying to lovingly say, “Please, focus on J2.”

Men and women, when you can see the difference—when you can separate J1 from J2, the scriptures are so much easier to understand when you are reading the Bible.

When you see “works” referenced in the Bible, you say, “That’s J2.” When you see something conditional in the Bible, you say, “Oh, that’s J2.” When you see something about faith, then you say, “That’s J1.”

The Bible is so much easier when you differentiate between these two judgments.

Finding J1 and J2

Let’s end by finding the J1 and J2 references in these passages.

#1: Ezekiel 16:59-60

For thus says the LORD God: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant. (Ezekiel 16:59-60)

J1-Yet I will remember my covenant with you. This is the covenant that He has given Abraham: “I going to be yours, I’m going to bless you, and you are going to be a blessing. I will remember that. I will always have my relationship with you.”

J2-You who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant. This J2 is in a negative sense. They were supposed to do good works, but they did not, and that is what it is referencing. ‘You didn’t do good works. You should have, but you did not.’

#2: Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. (Matthew 6:12)

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J1-And forgive us our debts.

J2-As we also have forgiven our debtors. That takes work. It's not easy. Honestly, it can be sacrificial.

#3: Zechariah 3:4-7

And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him, he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by. And the angel of the LORD solemnly assured Joshua, Thus says the LORD of hosts: If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. (Zechariah 3:4-7)

J1-Remove the filthy garments from him. Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments.

J2- If you will walk in my ways and keep my charge, then you shall rule my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here.

Review

We are asking a final question in this book: should the church focus more on J1 or J2?

Dear reader, I want to challenge you; when ninety-five percent of your Sunday morning audience is saved, please focus on J2 and talk about J2. Why?

He will choose His son's bride based on the good works of the bride. Our goal should be to hear the words from Jesus, "Well-done, good and faithful servant."

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Well, I hope this whole book was helpful to you. If you have questions, always feel free to email me at 1jealousGod@gmail.com.

Until then, do good.

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Thanks!

