



The Bridge

A BIBLE STUDY CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Volker Lamaack

Instructions to Students

God gave us a very precious gift - the Bible. To read the “Word of God” opens a reality to us, which is hidden to those who don’t study it. All of us should spend some time every day reading the Bible. If we do this with a prayerful and open heart, God will reveal himself to us. Our life will be changed completely. This correspondence course will be a help for you to understand the “Word of God” better.

Begin with the first lesson and study it carefully. Try to memorise what you have read. When you have finished the first lesson, please answer Test 1 and return the results straight to me by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Short answer are Okay. For example:

Test 1

1—T (True)

2—F (False)

3—F (False)

...

If there is anything you can’t answer, go back to the lesson and study this subject again. Those questions you really don’t know, just leave and take the next one. Continue with lesson two and test two, lesson three and test three..., until you finish the complete book.

If you are a seaman, we need your home and company address, and the latest news regarding your vacation. Please inform us also if you would like to have the next Bible Course. Fill in all the details at the end of the last test. Ask us if you have any more questions.

When we get your tests, we will mark them and return the results to you. Don’t worry about mistakes. You all learn by them. We will also include an answer key, certificate and the next book in our letter.

Begin straightaway! Study on the ship, at home and continue even when you join the next vessel. Take at least 20-30 minutes daily. We wish you God’s blessing.

Cover photo: Pixabay

Volker Lamaack
Hamburg
Germany

Mobile / WhatsApp / Signal
0049 (0) 1793994457

E-Mail
scfs.volker.lamaack@web.de

Facebook
Volker Lamaack

Web-Site
www.scfs.org

Martin Otto
Hamburg
Germany

Mobile / WhatsApp
0049 (0) 1793994456

E-Mail
scfs.martin.otto@gmx.de

Facebook
Martin Otto

Web-Site
www.scfs.org

Table of Contents:

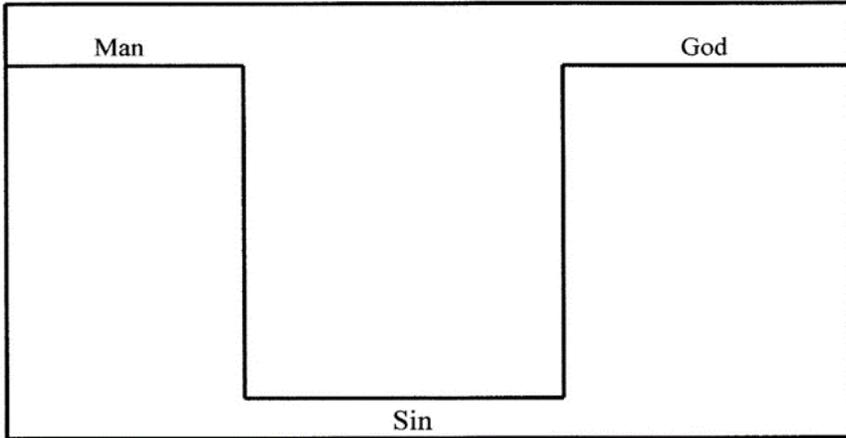
Lesson 1	The big gap	1
Lesson 2	God and man—two different natures	5
Lesson 3	How to come back to God	9
Lesson 4	God’s love	13
Lesson 5	The bridge	17
Lesson 6	Jesus—the only way	22
Lesson 7	Jesus— our Captain and Pilot	27
Lesson 8	To step over the bridge	31
Lesson 9	On the other side of the separation	37
Lesson 10	A wonderful relationship with God and other Christians	42
Lesson 11	Backsliding	47
Lesson 12	To be a servant of God	50

THE BRIDGE

Lesson One

The big gap

1st Illustration:



Please look at the illustration. On one side is God and on the other man. Both are separated by a big gap. The name of the gap is “Sin”. Everyone will of course agree that we are all sinners, but many people don’t understand how big this problem is. In the third chapter of the Bible we read how the perfect relationship between God and us was destroyed because of the disobedience of man.

God created man to have fellowship with him. He was very good to Adam and Eve. In the first and second chapter of Genesis we learn that God created a wonderful place for them. Nothing was lacking. They had enough to eat and to drink. They didn’t have to fear danger, sickness or any problem. We can’t imagine the peaceful harmony they had. In the beginning there was no gap at all between God and man.

But then something terrible happened. Adam and Eve preferred to disobey their creator. God never forced them to stay with him. He gave them both the freedom to choose. In fact, God commanded only one thing. He allowed them to eat from all fruits of the wonderful garden except from one tree. But Adam and Eve made the wrong decision. The devil, in the form of the snake, tempted them. Both followed his suggestion. They ran away from God and stepped into the trap of Satan. Both of them thought that by disobedience to the Lord they could gain knowledge.

God told Adam and Eve in advance what would happen if they sinned:

God the Lord commanded man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 2:16-17

After they sinned they had to face three different kinds of death:

1. Spiritual death

Losing the relationship with God means to lose spiritual life. Adam and Eve were banished from Paradise and they lost fellowship with the Lord. They had to suffer spiritual death at once.

The Lord God banished him (Adam) from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim (angels) and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:23-24)

The Bible says that we are dead in our sins.

You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of this kingdom of the air (the devil), the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. (Ephesians 2:1-2)

2. Physical death

From the moment they sinned, human beings became mortal. They just lived a time on earth and then they had to suffer physical death.

3. Eternal death

Physical death is not the end. Somebody who dies separated from God still has to face judgement. Like on a video film his life will be shown completely. Every single sin, which he has done, will speak against him. God will throw such a person into the lake of fire. Punishment in hell will last forever. There is no way to get out of it. Eternal punishment in Hell is also called "death" in the Bible.

If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:15

In *Romans 6:23* we read: *The wages of sin is death.*

Not only Adam and Eve sinned. We have all made the same wrong choice. There

is a gap between God and all human beings. This is really the main problem in the world.

Romans 3:10-13:

*There is **no one** righteous, **not even one**; there is **no one** who understands, **no one** who seeks God. **All** have turned away, they have **together** become worthless; there is **no one** who does good, **not even one**.*

Please answer Test 1 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 1

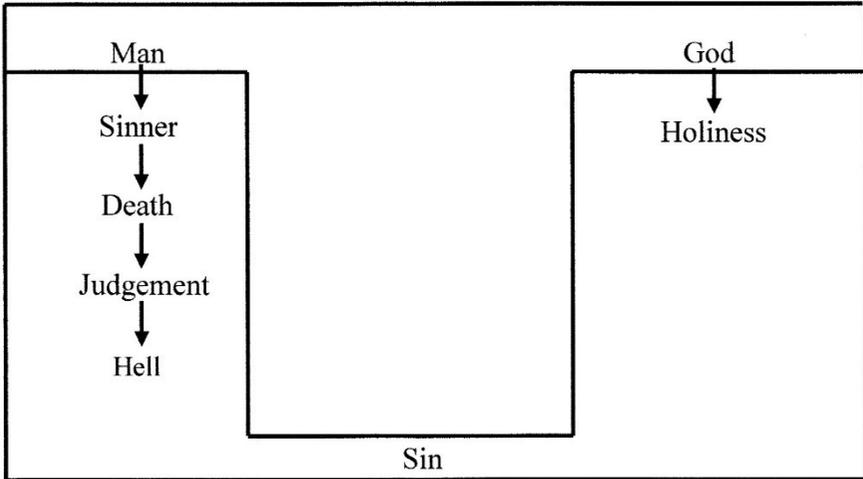
Are the following statements True (T) or False (F)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. God created men. | T | F |
| 2. God's plan from the beginning was to separate himself from us. | T | F |
| 3. God gave Adam and Eve 10 Commandments. | T | F |
| 4. God told men that he will not care much about sin. | T | F |
| 5. Adam and Eve were later allowed to return back to Paradise. | T | F |
| 6. There are people besides Jesus who have never sinned. | T | F |
| 7. The result of sin is death. | T | F |
| 8. In the moment when somebody sins, he has to suffer physical death at once. | T | F |
| 9. The Bible speaks about two different kinds of death. | T | F |
| 10. Because of God's love, the last judgement will never happen. | | |

Lesson 2

God and Man - two different natures

2nd Illustration



Please have a look at the second illustration. This lesson will help you to understand why God and man are so far from each other. The problem between God and us is not only sin. It goes much deeper. We and God have different natures. He is by nature holy and we are sinful. This is like black and white, like hot and cold. It does not fit together at all. Let us think about the deep difference between God's holy and our sinful nature.

1. God's holy nature

God said in *Isaiah 40:25*:

"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.

God is above everything and everybody. He is almighty, pure, sinless and without any fault. He can't lie. He is faithful to his own words and promises.

Moses said to the king of Egypt: *"You will know there is no one like the Lord!" (Exodus 8:10).*

Later he sang in a song: *"Who among the gods [so called gods] is like you, O Lord? Who is like you - majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" (Exodus 15:11).*

Hundreds of years later King David said: *"How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears."*
(*2 Samuel 7:22*)

The following verses give us insights about God's holy nature:

O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below - you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way.

(1 King 8:23-24)

Who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the heavenly beings? (Psalm 89:6)

To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare him to? (Isaiah 40:18)

Only when we get an idea of God's greatness and holiness can we understand our sinfulness. In fact, it is his holiness which demands punishment of our sin.

2. Our sinful nature

Most people would agree that they make some mistakes. But many of them still think deep in their heart that they are not really bad. They compare themselves with others and come to the conclusion that they are better than most.

But God has a different point of view. We have a sinful nature already the moment we are born. It goes much deeper than to believe that just a few mistakes and weaknesses are our problem. King David wrote the following words when he felt the burden of his own big sin as never before:

"I know my transgressions [evil deeds] and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:4-6)

"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden, too heavy to bear." (Psalm 38:4).

We are not to compare ourselves with an apple with a little fault, which is easily cut out. Because our complete nature is sinful, we are rather like a totally rotten fruit.

Maybe you ask: "Are there no differences? Is a very religious person not better than a murderer?" Of course he is! But consider the following verse:

Whoever keeps the whole law [of God] and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. (James 2:10)

One sin already spoils us. We should keep all commandments of God. If we sin once, we are already lawbreakers. Remember what happened with Adam and Eve. After they had sinned only one time, they had to leave Paradise. The Lord never allowed them to return. The line between God and man was cut. It was too late. Suddenly there was this big separation, which you can see on the second illustration above.

We'll give you another example: Suppose a person commits just three sins per day, either in mind or words or actions. How many sins is he committing per year? More than 1,000! Suppose he is 30 years old: there are at least 30,000 sins in his life. In fact, most people commit many more than 3 sins a day. And every single sin counts against us at the day of judgement.

Please answer Test 2 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 2

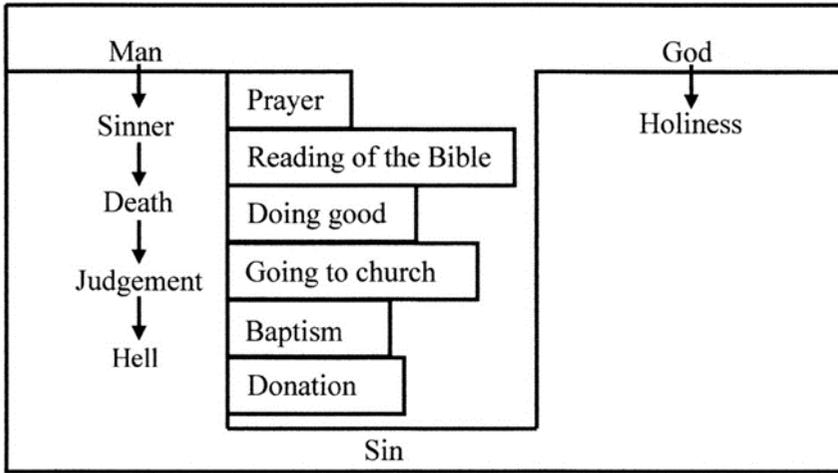
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Because God created men in his image, we have the same perfect nature as he does. | T | F |
| 2. God - on the good side - and the devil - on the bad side - have almost the same power. | T | F |
| 3. God is sinless. | T | F |
| 4. Only when we get an idea of God’s greatness and holiness can we understand our sinfulness. | T | F |
| 5. Though most people know that they are not perfect, they consider themselves not to be very bad. | T | F |
| 6. Sometimes we sin, but most of us have a good nature. | T | F |
| 7. King David said that he had been sinful since birth. | T | F |
| 8. Every religious person will go to heaven. | T | F |
| 9. We can learn from <i>James</i> that only those who have broken <i>all</i> commandments of God are guilty. | T | F |
| 10. Those who have done only few sins in their life don’t need to fear the day of judgement. | T | F |

Lesson 3

How to come back to God

3rd Illustration:



Most people believe in God. They are sure that there is a heaven and a hell. Nobody, of course, wants to go to hell. Because of this, many start with different kinds of religious activities. Through being religious they try to win the favour of God in order to come closer to him. They build different kinds of religious bridges in order to overcome the gap.

Let's have a look at the third illustration. You can see six different kinds of religious bridges. They are only examples. Other kinds of good works are also possible. The big question is: Do they bring us back to God? Can we go to heaven if we observe those things? The first bridge is:

Prayer

We should pray every day. Many times the Bible tells us to do so. We talk with the living God by prayer. He allows us to bring our requests to him and we in return praise his goodness.

But many people think their daily prayers, which they repeat again and again can save them. Their hope is to win the favour of God by means of following religious rules. To pray daily is indeed necessary. But it is wrong to assume, that the amounts of minutes or even hours, which we spend in prayer, can wipe away our sins.

To read the Bible

When we pray, we talk with God. When we read the Bible, he talks with us, because it is the word of God. Everything we know about God is revealed through the Bible. It is God's revelation to us. Because of this, everyone should take time daily to read the Scriptures. But can our daily reading of the Bible, which we present to God as a religious activity, take away our sins? Can we go to heaven by it?

To read the word of God every day is necessary, but does not mean that the sin problem is already solved. The reason we should read the Bible is not that we go automatically to heaven by doing it, but by reading the Bible we learn how God saves us.

Doing good and keeping the commandments of God

Most of the people we talk to think that they have a chance to go to heaven if they do good. They hope to be justified when they keep the commandments of God. There is no doubt at all that we should be very sincere in following what God said. But we have to ask the question again: Will this give us eternal life? The answer would be "Yes" if we could keep all the commandments of God. But because nobody is able to keep the law of the Lord 100%, no one can be saved by doing it. Please now take time to read some verses from the Bible, which will make it very clear to you:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God [don't reach God's standard], and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that comes by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished – he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith, apart from observing the law. (Romans 3:23-28)

A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16)

All who rely [trust] on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." (Galatians 3:10-11)

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no-one can boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

God saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:5)

Why is it not possible to go to heaven by keeping the commandments of God? There are at least three simple reasons:

- We are just not good enough. We are not able to keep the commandments of God as we should. His standard is 100%. Somebody who reaches 99% fails already. And we are all well below this perfect standard of the Lord.
- All our good works that we do cannot take away even one single sin we have done.
- Remember *James 2:10: Whoever keeps the whole law of God and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.* One sin, which we have committed, makes us guilty of breaking **all** commandments of God.

If we take the Bible we have to notice that good works will not bring us closer to heaven. We should do them, but they can't justify us. And this fact brings us in big troubles, because sin must be punished! God's holiness demands it!

Going to Church, Baptism, giving donations...

We are sure that you have got the message already. Follow the things mentioned above, because they are very important. However don't expect that they can be the bridge for your salvation. Please notice the following important sentence:

***To follow the rules of God is not the reason
of our salvation - however the result!***

We cannot be saved by keeping God's commandments but it will follow our salvation. Good works can't be counted against our sins. It is not only the sin which we commit that is the biggest problem, but our sinful nature; our sinful heart. God's holiness requires a greater and more perfect sacrifice than all our religious activities are able to provide.

Have a look again at the third illustration. All the bridges which we build are too short. We are still on the wrong side, which ends in hell. Is there no hope for us?

Please answer Test 3 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 3

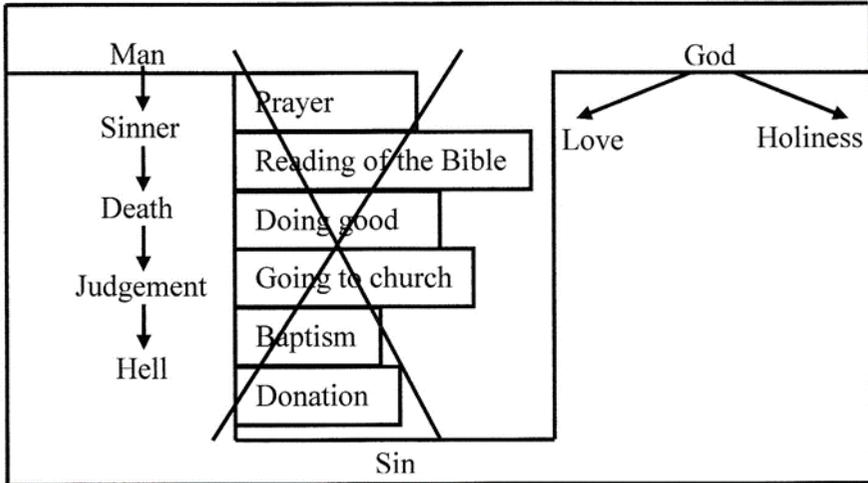
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. It is God’s holiness which demands punishment of sin. | T | F |
| 2. To pray three times a day will bring you to heaven automatically. | T | F |
| 3. Reading the Bible is not very important for everybody. | T | F |
| 4. If you keep God’s commandments up to 95%, you have a good chance to enter heaven. | T | F |
| 5. A person is justified by faith, apart from observing the law of God (<i>Galatians 2:16</i>). | T | F |
| 6. Somebody who wants to be justified by observing the law is under a curse. (<i>Galatians 3:10-11</i>). | T | F |
| 7. To keep God’s commandments is not important. | T | F |
| 8. We are not able to keep God’s law as we should. | T | F |
| 9. Going to church and helping others is not necessary. | T | F |
| 10. We can take it easy with sin, because God always forgives. | T | F |

Lesson 4

God's love

3rd Illustration:



Look at the right side of illustration No. 4. You have learned already that God is **holy**. It is one main part of his nature or character. The other main side of his nature is **love**. Both sides - his **holiness** and his **love** - have the same importance.

Please now study some verses about his love. The most famous verse about it is written in *John 3:16*:

Jesus said: *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

To love somebody who is kind to us is easy. To love somebody who doesn't love but who doesn't harm us, is more difficult. To love somebody who sinned a thousand times against us seems to be impossible. But God still loves us, even though we have sinned so much. We certainly don't deserve God's grace. But his compassion is with us and he wants to give us eternal life.

Please read *Romans 5:8*:

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Once Jesus illustrated to the people God's amazing love by telling them a parable. You may know it already, but please take your Bible again. Read and meditate about the wonderful truth Jesus teaches us by this parable. It is written in *Luke 15:11-32*.

Jesus said: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there wasted his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the garbage that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

When he came to his sense, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have enough food, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father.

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

But the father said to his servants: 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate."

The father in this story represents God. He gave us life and so many good things. He raised us up and supported us with food, drink, a job, health... Even the difficult events in our life were allowed by God. By them he taught us many lessons and helped us to trust him more. His love, grace, provision and kindness surrounded us.

Now let's have a look at the boy who ran away from his Father. He has a name. Just put in your own name. We all sinned often by disobeying God. We hurt our Father in heaven thousands of times. With every sin, which we have committed, the separation between God and us became bigger.

The son in our story took the money his father gave him, and lived a wild life (*verse 13*). You can imagine what he did. He went into the clubs and bars, losing control by drinking too much alcohol. By smoking he harmed his health. He took several women and lived in impurity. (We are providing a modern interpretation of the story). It was a very bad lifestyle.

This young man lived a life, which is very similar to that of most seamen. Sailors told us that around 80% of them take girls in the different ports. Many of those men are religious. They claim to believe in the Lord. However their behaviour is rather to be compared with the lifestyle of the son in our story. And even if you don't do all these things there is still much sin which you have already committed in your life.

After all the money was gone, the young man realised his big mistake. When he sat in the dirt among the pigs, he deeply realised his sin. He knew very well that he didn't deserve to be called a son of such a good father (*verse 18*). But still he decided to return to him.

How did his "Daddy" react? Please read *verses 22-24* again. He was already waiting for him. Maybe he went outside every day to watch in case his lost son would come back. In his loving-kindness he accepted him as his son again. Full of mercy he embraced him and gave him clean clothes and organised a wonderful celebration.

With this story Jesus taught us: **"Look - this is God!"**

Beside holiness love is the other side of God's nature. Love includes such things as: kindness, grace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness...

More passages to read about God's love:

Jeremiah 31:3:

God said: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness."

Ephesians 2:4-5:

Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in sins. It is by grace you have been saved.

1 John 3:1:

How great is the love the Father has given us. That we should be called children of God!

We are all evil sinners, and we all deserve to go to hell. But because of his love God wants to save us.

1 Timothy 2:4:

God wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Please answer Test 4 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 4

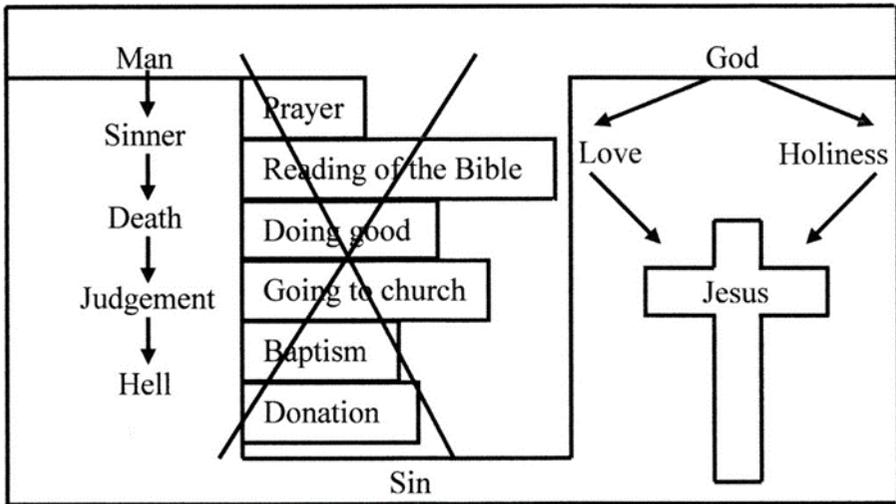
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Holiness is the only side of God’s nature or character. | T | F |
| 2. The most famous verse about God’s love is written in <i>John 3:16</i> . | T | F |
| 3. It is sufficient to work hard to receive God’s grace. | T | F |
| 4. Some people are too bad. They can’t be saved. | T | F |
| 5. Some people are too good. They don’t need the grace of God. | T | F |
| 6. Even if we run very far away from God, he is still waiting for us. | T | F |
| 7. God can only accept us if we struggle hard in order to present him a clean life by our own strength. | T | F |
| 8. In <i>Luke 15:11-32</i> Jesus teaches us how God is compassionate. | T | F |
| 9. God’s love includes such things as: kindness, grace, mercy, compassion and forgiveness. | T | F |
| 10. God doesn’t want to save all men. | T | F |

Lesson 5

The Bridge

5th Illustration:



Start again with a look at this illustration. God's *love* and his *holiness* are the main sides of God's nature. But now there seems to arise a problem. Do you still remember what you have learned about God's holiness (Lesson No. 2)? ***"It is the holiness of God, which demands the punishment of the sinner!"*** And please recall what you have learned about God's love (Lesson No. 4)? ***"It is the love of God which wants to save the sinner!"*** What will God do? Will he follow his holiness and disregard his love? This would mean every human being has to go to hell. But this is not possible. How can God disregard his love?

Or will God follow his love and neglect his holiness? This would mean that everyone can go straight to heaven. This is not possible. How can God forget his holiness? Is there no solution for this problem? How can the love and holiness of our Lord be satisfied? God himself solved this big problem.

God's solution:

God sent his own son, Jesus Christ, to earth. Jesus preached the word of God; he demonstrated love and healed the sick. But this was not the main reason for his coming. Jesus came to die on the cross for our sins. He was punished for the sin we have committed.

Already in the Old Testament - several hundred years before Christ was born - God sent the prophet Isaiah to speak about the sacrifice of Christ for us. He didn't mention the name "Jesus" yet it is obvious that he speaks about him. *Isaiah 53:1-10*:

He [Jesus] grew up before him [God] like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we did not respect him.

Surely he took up our weaknesses and carried our sorrows. Yet we considered him punished by God, rejected by him and distressed.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our sins. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the sins of us all. He was oppressed and distressed, yet he did not open his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgement he was taken away.

Who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the sins of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. Though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering he will see his offspring and prolong his days. The will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.

After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life, and be satisfied by his knowledge my righteous servant [Jesus] will justify many and will bear their sins.

It is easy to realise that the prophet is talking about nobody else but the coming Christ. This passage is one of the most amazing ones in the Bible. Jesus is the solution for our big problem! It is God's holiness which demands the punishment for our sin. And because Christ was punished for our sin the holy requirements of God were perfectly satisfied. And because Jesus died for our mistakes God's love, which desired to save us, was also satisfied.

Have a look at illustration No. 5 again: see the cross of Jesus. Here the love and holiness of God came together. Our sin was punished and His love broke through.

Jesus suffered the hell, which we deserved. 2000 years ago God built a bridge for us. The gate to heaven is now open!

Have a careful look at illustration No. 6 (next page) and try to understand what the sacrifice of Jesus means for you:

The name of the big separation between God and us is “Sin”. Christ died for them. This means that he is the bridge between God and us. Many people think that their good works and the sacrifice of Jesus together would save them from hell. However remember the following verses, which you have already read before:

Romans 3:23-28:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished. He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith.

Galatians 2:16:

A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 3:10-11:

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith."

Ephesians 2:8-9:

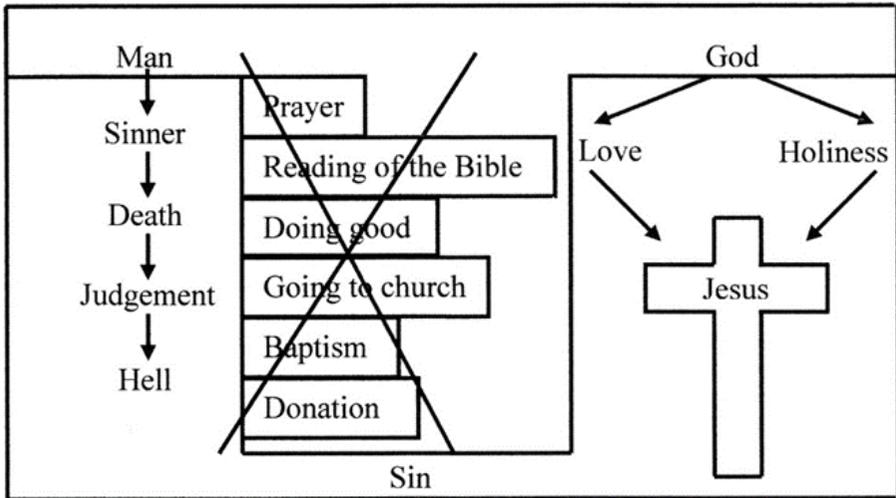
It is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.

Titus 3:5:

God saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

You can be saved only by faith in the grace of the Lord, not by observing the law!

In *Acts 13:38-39* the apostle Paul said: “Dear brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.”



The law of Moses are for example the 10 commandments. We have to keep all of them as best as we can. But the New Testament teaches us that we are not justified by doing it. Justification comes alone through Jesus. He paid the high price to satisfy God.

An example:

Suppose there is a big, deep river with a strong current. You have some business to do on the other side. A bridge is available, constructed by an excellent architect and built by well trained bridge-builders. But instead of using this bridge you start to make your own. Though you are neither an architect nor have you any idea how to complete such a building, you ignore the existing bridge. You start your project, but it collapses. You do it again and again, but never get it finished. In the meantime thousands of people are using the bridge and you are still on the wrong side.

What is the meaning of this little story? God himself built a bridge, which is strong enough to bring us to him. Most people know about it. They know that Jesus is the Saviour, they believe in him, and they appreciate and even love him. But they are still busy struggling with their salvation instead of coming to Christ the Saviour. To know about a bridge, without using it, cannot bring somebody to the other side.

Please answer Test 5 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 5

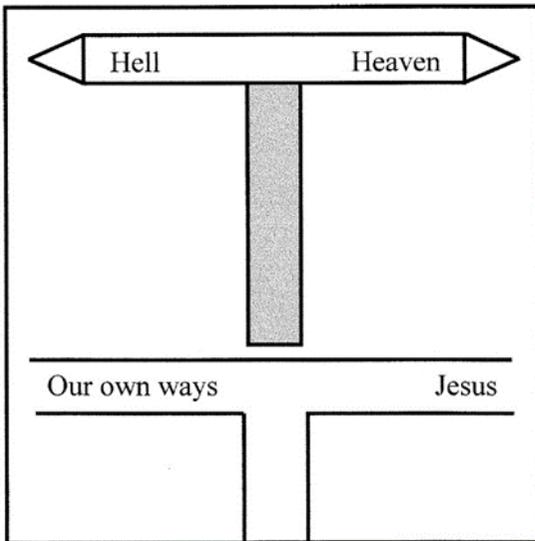
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. It is impossible to bring God’s holiness and love together. | T | F |
| 2. The main reason for Christ’s coming was to heal the sick. | T | F |
| 3. Isaiah had already spoken about Jesus hundreds of years before he was on earth. | T | F |
| 4. Isaiah wrote about the apostle Paul: <i>“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our sins; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”</i> Isaiah 53:5 | T | F |
| 5. Jesus satisfied God’s holiness and his love for us. | T | F |
| 6. Our good works and the sacrifice of Jesus together will save us. | T | F |
| 7. To keep God’s commandments is very important, but this can’t justify us from our sins. | T | F |
| 8. The laws of Moses include the 10 commandments. | T | F |
| 9. Millions of people try to build their own little bridges to God. | T | F |
| 10. Jesus is God’s only bridge for us. | T | F |

Lesson 6

Jesus - the only way

7th Illustration:



Jesus wants to be your bridge to salvation. Before we explain to you later how to be saved through Jesus, you should first get to know him better. In *John 14:6* Jesus said about himself:

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Jesus claims to be the only way back to God the Father. Many people can't believe this. They agree that Christ is the founder of a religion, that he did many amazing things, that he demonstrated God's love, that he healed the sick, that he was a

good example to others. But they become very angry that he claims to be the only way back to the Father. However it is a matter of fact that nobody else but Christ can save us.

Why is Jesus so unique? Why is he different from the founders of religions? This lesson will challenge you, because there are many Bible verses which you should look up. But don't get too tired to do it. The best way to get to know Jesus is to study what amazing things the Bible teaches us about him.

1. Jesus is God.

He came for around 33 years to earth and lived as a human being in order to be our sacrifice for sin. Because of this Jesus is sometimes called *“Son of Man”*. The Bible also says that he is the *“Son of God”*. But in the same moment the Bible leaves no doubts that he is also *“God”*. Take time to read the following verses, which prove it clearly:

Isaiah 9:6:

*To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his Shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

This is a prophecy about Christ. He is called “God”.

John 1:18:

“The One who is at the Father’s side [Jesus] is God.”

Who is at the Father’s side? Jesus! And the one who is at the Father’s side is called “God”. That means: Jesus is called in the Bible “God”.

John 20:28:

*Thomas said to him Jesus, “My Lord and my **God!**”*

Some people claim, that this was just a call of surprise after Christ resurrected. But Jesus didn’t correct him. He accepted the worship of Thomas.

Romans 9:5:

*...Christ, who is **God over all**, be forever praised! Amen*

Philippians 2:6:

*Christ Jesus, who, being **in very nature God**, ...*

Here are even more verses, which prove that he is God. With a Bible you might look them up. *John 1:1-14; John 10:30; John 12:45; John 14:7-9; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8-9.*

2. Other verses, which prove that Jesus is unique.

John 4:13-14: Jesus gives the water of life:

Jesus answered: “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst.”

John 6:35: Jesus is the bread of life.

Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

John 8:12: Jesus is the light of the world.

Jesus said: “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 10:9: Jesus is the gate to salvation.

Jesus said: “I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved.”

John 10:14: Jesus is the good shepherd.

Jesus said: “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.”

John 11:25: Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."

John 14:6: Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through me."

3. Jesus - different from ordinary human beings.

Luke 1:35: Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

The angel said to Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Matthew 1:23: He was born by a virgin.

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him "Immanuel" – which means, "God with us."

Matthew 28:18: Jesus has unlimited power.

Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Matthew 28:20: Jesus is everywhere.

Jesus said to his disciples: "I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

John 21:17: Jesus has all knowledge.

Peter said to Jesus: "Lord, you know all things."

Hebrews 13:8: Jesus does not change like a human being.

Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever.

John 1:3: God created all things through Jesus.

Through Jesus all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Colossians 1:17: Jesus is the supreme authority.

Jesus is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Luke 24:51: Jesus ascended to heaven.

While Jesus was blessing his disciples, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

No founder of any religion was like Jesus. They only sought a way to God but were misled. Jesus however is the only way and our only bridge to the Father. He is the only one who can save us. Please notice the following three verses from the Bible:

John 14:6: Nobody comes to God, except through Jesus.

Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. Nobody comes to the Father except through me."

Acts 4:12: Salvation is only through Jesus.

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

1 Timothy 2:5: Jesus is the only mediator between God and us.

There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Please answer Test 6 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 6

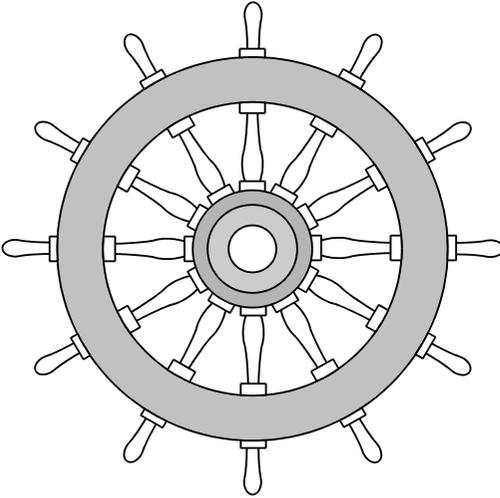
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. There are many ways to salvation. | T | F |
| 2. Jesus is not God. He was just sent by him. | T | F |
| 3. Jesus lived for around 33 years on earth. | T | F |
| 4. God the Father and God the Son are not the same in person, but the same in nature. | T | F |
| 5. Jesus is the only door to salvation. | T | F |
| 6. Mary conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit. | T | F |
| 7. Jesus knows everything. | T | F |
| 8. Jesus upholds the universe. | T | F |
| 9. Other founders of religions were just seeking the truth but not finding it. | T | F |
| 10. <i>1 Timothy 2:5</i> says that there are at least two ways to salvation. | T | F |

Lesson 7

Jesus - our Captain and Pilot

8th Illustration:



Here is one other thing you should know before we go ahead with the question of how to be saved. You need to be aware that Jesus not only wants to come into your heart to save you. When he enters your life, he will also start to change you. Everybody likes to be saved, but not everyone is happy to obey someone else. However we have to consider that Jesus is Saviour *and* Lord.

Have a look at the illustration. It is a steering wheel of a ship. Though sometimes an officer or quarter-

master may stand at the wheel, it is the Captain who is in command. If he says: "Turn right", everybody has to obey. If he says: "Stop", the engine has to be stopped. And if the Captain himself stood at the wheel, nobody would come to push him away, in order to take over. (The Pilot inside the port area is of course an exception).

Let us compare your life with a ship. Somebody has to be in control of everything. And in fact, there are only two possibilities. The normal case for an adult is that he is the one who makes the decisions. He controls his thoughts, words and actions. He chooses how to treat his family, friends and how to do his job. It is up to him how he spends his money and time, what habits he has, and how seriously he takes everything with God.

The second possibility is that Jesus is in control. In the moment when he comes in your heart to save you, he will take over and become the Captain and Pilot of all parts of your life. He will never accept that you are the Master; He is the only one. One to help when you are in time of need. Either Jesus comes into your heart to save *and* to be in charge of everything, or he will not come in at all.

Be sure, when Christ comes in to your life, you will not be the same as before.

2 Corinthians 5:17:

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.

Maybe you remember that we said before that observing the law of God will not save you, but that observing the law will be the result of your salvation. You will not be perfect and sinless, but your desire will be to follow only the footsteps of Jesus and nobody and nothing else. It is not always easy to obey Jesus, but you will still try to do it, because you love him.

John 14:21:

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him”:

It is impossible to love Jesus, without having a big desire to obey his perfect will.

The Bible says that everybody who is saved is the “Temple of the Holy Spirit”.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17:

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple.

The Spirit's Temple is holy.

The Apostle Paul writes in *1 Thessalonians 4:7:*

God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

However, be aware that you can't live a holy life in your own strength and by your own struggles. Salvation (the beginning of the Christian life – when you receive Jesus in your heart) and the growth in holiness (the rest of your life as somebody in whom Jesus dwells) are only possible through the grace of Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:30:

It is because of God that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

However you need a willingness to obey him. If this is not the case, you can't be a true Christian.

If Jesus is the Captain of your life, it will have very practical results. We'll just give a few examples:

- Your thoughts and words: Before you had many evil and impure thoughts in mind and words on your lips. But now you allow Jesus to control them
- As somebody who accepted Christ as his Saviour, you will treat your wife, children, friends, crew mates... in a different - more loving way.
- You will no longer waste money, time... You know that those things are given by God, and you are responsible to him for how you use them.

- You will quit bad habits, and actively start to do good. You can't join your friends any more when they go to evil places. Even if they laugh and mock, you will rather obey Jesus than to follow their bad example. Jesus never promises that it is easy to follow him. Sometimes problems even start when we ask him to be the Captain and Pilot of our life. The reason is that perhaps your family, relatives, friends... can't understand that you don't want to do any more what they do.

Please answer Test 7 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 7

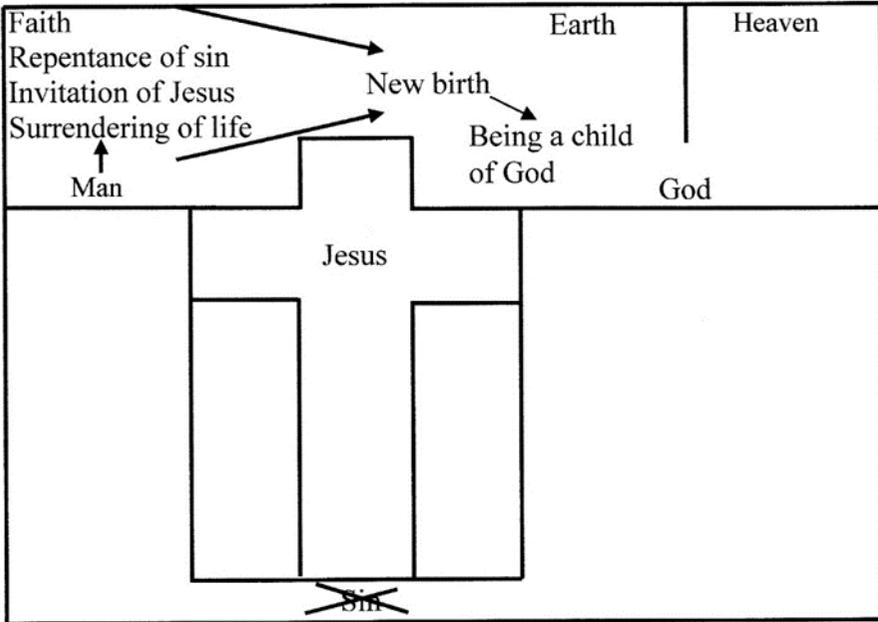
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Someone in whom Christ is not dwelling controls his life on his own. It is not controlled by the Lord. | T | F |
| 2. In some cases Jesus is willing to follow us, instead of our following him. | T | F |
| 3. If Christ comes into your heart, it will not cause many changes. | T | F |
| 4. If somebody loves Jesus, he wants to obey him. | T | F |
| 5. Everyone is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. | T | F |
| 6. We can live a holy life by our own human strength. | T | F |
| 7. Somebody in whom Christ is living, never sins any more. | T | F |
| 8. Jesus wants to control only 10% of our money. He doesn't care what we do with the rest. | T | F |
| 9. A person who is in Christ will start to quit bad habits and actively do good. | T | F |
| 10. If you discover by reading the Bible wrong things that you have been doing, you should stop doing those things. | T | F |

Lesson 8

To step over the bridge

9th Illustration:



As usual, start with a careful look at the illustration. You can see how a person changes from the one side to the other side of the gap. He forgets about all his religious bridges and through a spiritual birth he changes to God's side. His sins are forgiven and he becomes a child of God. Now we have to ask the question: What does the Bible teach us how to experience this in a personal way?

John 1:12-13:

All who receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

This passage is very important. It tells us that nobody is automatically a child of God. In fact, by nature we are all just creations of God, but not yet his children. However, it is possible to become one. How?

1. To believe in Jesus.

Faith is, in fact, the main condition!

Hebrews 11:6:

Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Well - you might say - of course I do believe in Jesus. But be sure: millions believe somehow in Christ without being saved. Why is this the case? Most of the people believe just in theory that he is the Saviour. But in practise, they still try to save themselves. Remember the illustration No. 3. Think about all the different bridges people try to build (good works, prayers, reading the Bible, giving money...). They hope to gain salvation by doing those things and forget the only real bridge - **Jesus**.

If you believe in the right bridge, but don't put your feet on it, you will still be on the wrong side. Likewise - if you believe that Jesus saves, but try to save yourself, the sin-gap is still between God and you. In fact, when the Bible speaks about faith in Christ, it means that you have to put all your trust and confidence for your salvation in him alone. Be aware that you can bring Jesus nothing else than a sinful life. Expect that he is able and willing to forgive all your sins. Trust that nothing has to be added to the salvation, which he already provided for you at the cross.

Another reason why many people who have "some kind of faith" in Jesus are still not saved is their lack of sincerity. Only when we come with an honest, sincere and humble heart to him, can he give us eternal life.

2. Realisation and confession of your sins

Romans 3:23:

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 6:23:

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remember: sin is the big problem between God and you! It is this gap, which separates you from him, and will bring you, without Jesus to hell. Because of this, sin must be confessed.

Acts 2:38:

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

1 John 1:9:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The Bible says that you should confess sins directly to Jesus. He died for your sins, and he alone is able to forgive them. Tell him in a prayer your sins by name and also ask for forgiveness of those sins which you may have forgotten, or of which you are unaware.

However when you repent of your sins you must feel really sorry about them. To confess sins merely as a traditional religious activity can't help you. It has to come from your heart.

The good news of the Gospel is that we are saved by grace.
Grace means to receive something that is not deserved!

3. To receive Jesus in your heart.

John 1:12-13:

All who received him [Jesus], those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Here we learn that besides believing in Christ we have to receive Jesus in our heart. What does it mean?

Revelation 3:20:

Jesus said: "Here I am, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." ["... eat with him, and he with me..." means: "to have fellowship with Jesus"]

Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart, and he waits for you to open. He will never break it down but is willing to enter your heart through the Holy Spirit if you invite him by a simple prayer.

4. To become "Born Again".

Another illustration the Bible uses is the "New Birth".

John 3:3-5:

Jesus declared to Nicodemus: "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" Jesus answered: "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit."

According to the words of Jesus it is impossible to see the kingdom of God, unless the experience of a new spiritual birth takes place. To be "born of water" means that your sins are washed away. And to be "born of the Spirit" means that the Holy Spirit enters your life.

Why do you need a spiritual birth? Remember what you have learned in the first lesson - that we are all spiritually dead because of our sins. A spiritually dead person needs spiritual life! But nobody can produce spiritual life by himself. It will be given to him in the moment Jesus enters his heart through the Holy Spirit.

Another proof is written in *Titus 3:5*:

God saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Paul speaks here about a “rebirth” - a second birth which saves us, and not the good things which we have done.

James 1:18:

God chose to give us birth through the word of truth that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

1 Peter 1:3:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1:23:

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

5. The Practical Step

God is calling you, and he wants you to receive Jesus in your heart. The Lord does not expect from you the guarantee of a perfect life in future, but a sincere heart. He did everything for you. Are you prepared to let Jesus into your heart? I will now ask you a few questions. Please give after each one your personal answer and underline either **Yes** or **No**.

- Do you believe with all your heart that Jesus is the **only** way to salvation? Underline: **YES** **NO**
- Do you believe that no church, religion, or other person and not even your religious activities can be the bridge to God, but Jesus alone? **YES** **NO**
- Do you really feel sorry about your sins? Are you honestly willing to repent and turn away from them? **YES** **NO**
- Are you willing to invite Jesus into your heart in order to receive spiritual life? **YES** **NO**

- Are you willing to surrender all parts of your life to Jesus? Your thoughts, words, actions, family, friendships, job, money, time, habits and even your religious background and opinions to Jesus? Are you willing to obey and follow him in all things with a sincere heart until the end of your life, even though you will not be perfect? **YES** **NO**

If you have answered only one question with “**NO**”, then you are probably not yet fully prepared to receive Jesus. In this case, carry on studying this book, and the following Bible Courses, which we will send you. Read, pray and seek God, and he will certainly reveal himself to you. Write to us and ask if there are any more questions. Explain what the hindrance is so that we can help you. Don’t feel shy or ashamed to do it.

Another suggestion is to review the first eight lessons again to fully understand so that your heart gets prepared to take this step. But anyway, whether you would like to receive Jesus now or later, try to finish the book and return all twelve tests to us.

Only if you answered all questions with “**YES**”, we encourage you to kneel down and pray to Jesus. You can do it now, using your own words or follow the suggested prayer below. Express to him what is on your heart. Confess your sins, ask him to enter your heart and surrender your life completely to him. You can talk to Jesus as to a friend. You don’t need a prayer book or anything else. Come to him just as you are. Believe that he will do according to his promises. Take the step right now!

Here is a sample prayer that may be of help to people who do not know how to start a conversation with God.

“Dear God, I am coming to you. I have lived for a long time without you. I have been in control of my life and have done many things which were not according how you would have liked it. I am guilty. [Here you should mention specific sins you can think of.] I am sorry for these. Please forgive me. I ask you to set me free from all bondage to sin and the devil. I want to belong to you alone.

Dear Lord Jesus, I am counting on you. Thank you that you have given your life for my sins. Please enter my life through your Holy Spirit. I want to become God’s child. I want you to be with me always.

I ask you to be my guide from now on. Please go before me and show me the way I should go. Please change me where you think I need to be changed. I am willing to obey you. Thank you for everything you did for me! Glory, praise and worship be to you alone! Amen!”

Please answer Test 8 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 8

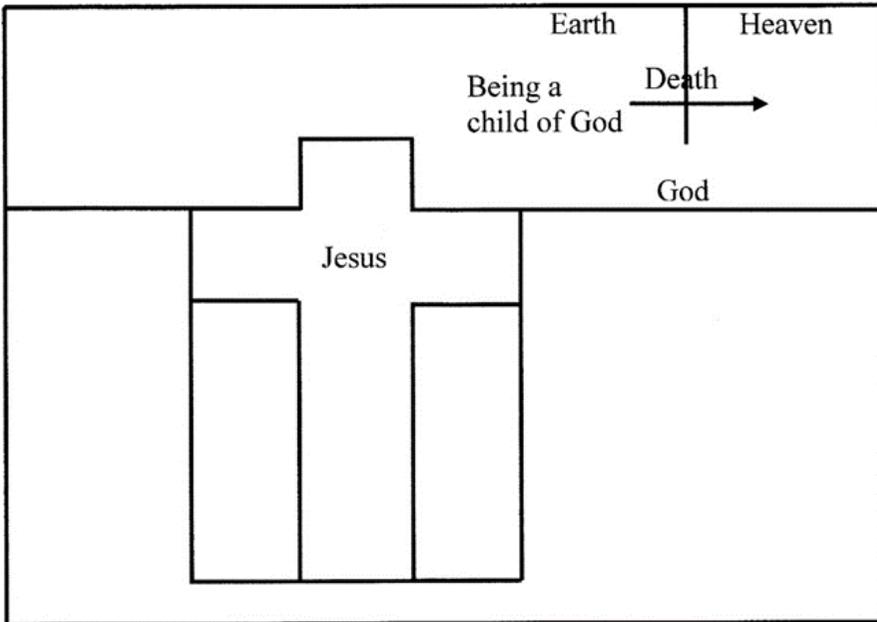
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. God invites everyone to become His child. | T | F |
| 2. Everyone who has <u>some</u> kind of faith in Jesus is a child of God. | T | F |
| 3. True, sincere faith regarding salvation in Jesus is the main condition to go to heaven. | T | F |
| 4. Faith in Jesus means to put all hope, trust and confidence regarding salvation only in him. | T | F |
| 5. Sometimes Jesus uses force to come into our life. | T | F |
| 6. Without a “New Birth” nobody can see the kingdom of God. | T | F |
| 7. Without the “New Birth” we are still (spiritually) dead in our sin. | T | F |
| 8. Grace means to receive something that we don’t work for. | T | F |
| 9. To repent honestly of our sins is very important if we want to receive Jesus into our heart. | T | F |
| 10. God prepared everything for our salvation. We just have to accept Jesus by faith. | T | F |

Lesson 9

On the other side of the separation

10th Illustration:



Start again with a look at the illustration. God and men are now united. Even if you have not yet taken the step, please carry on studying this book. Be aware that the gap is still between Jesus and you, but it will be still beneficial for you to continue. Pray to God, that he might enlighten you, so that you become ready to receive Jesus.

If you asked Christ to come into your heart, you are now on the other side of the separation. You are a child of God and belong to his family. Remember *John 1:12-13*, where it is written: “*All who received Jesus, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*”

This is the most important decision you have ever made. It will last into eternity and is a reason for great joy. In *Luke 15:10* it is written: “*There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*”

Please take your Bible, and write inside the cover the actual date and: “***Today is my spiritual birthday.***” In the same way that you remember your physical birthday, it is great not to forget the date of your spiritual one.

Though you are of course still here on earth, you are now on God's side. Death will be just the gate for you to change from this life with Jesus to eternal life in heaven with him.

How it is possible to know for sure that a person, who received Christ, is saved? The answer is very simple. It is because salvation does not depend on what you have done, but on what Christ has done for you. What you do will never last, but what Jesus has done will be forever. He did everything for your salvation, and you have just received it like a wonderful present. Base your new life on the promises of the Bible. Read the following verses, which prove that those who are in Christ are saved for sure:

John 5:24:

*Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me **has eternal life** and will **not be condemned**; he **has crossed over from death to life**.*

Romans 5:9-10:

*Since we have now been justified by his blood, **how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him**. For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, **how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!***

Romans 8:1:

*There is now **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

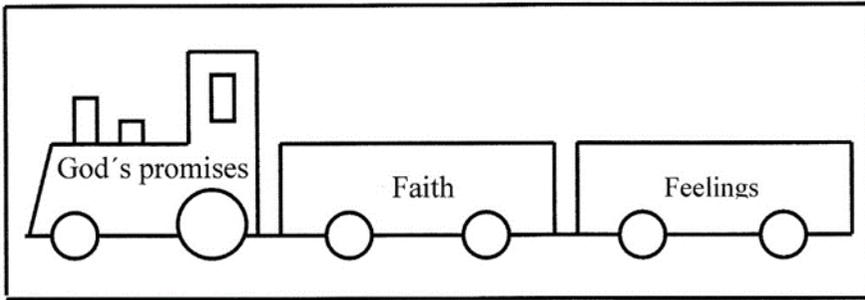
Romans 8:38-39:

*I am convinced that neither **death nor life**, neither **angels nor demons**, neither the **present nor the future**, nor **any powers**, neither **height nor depth**, nor **anything else in all creation**, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

1 John 5:11-13:

*This is the testimony: God **has given** us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son **has life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God **so that you may know that you have eternal life**.*

11th Illustration



Try to get the meaning of Illustration No. 11. Let's compare the life of a true Christian with a train. What will bring us forward? Can you be sure that you are saved because your feelings are now wonderful? It is certainly very nice to have great feelings. But the problem is that they are not stable. Sometimes they are up and sometimes down. If you rely too much on your feelings, you will be like a wave on the sea. You can't trust them, because they are not under your control.

Is our faith the most important? Well, faith is very important in connection with our salvation. But sometimes our faith is weak. Even faith is not always as stable as it should be. Does it mean that salvation is still uncertain for children of God if the faith is temporarily weak? No, because everything stands on the promises of God. Only that which God has done for us can give assurance of salvation. If the life of a true Christian is compared with a train, only his promises can draw it forward and bring us to his destiny. Our faith will just hang on to the promises and the feeling might follow. But never base your life on anything else than Jesus and his true word!

When doubts come, remember what the Bible says. We'll give you a few examples regarding other promises on which you should stand:

If somebody confesses his sins, they will be forgiven.

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

If somebody invites Jesus into his heart, he will come in.

Jesus said: "I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)

Jesus will always be with us.

Jesus said: "I will be with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20)

*If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.
(2 Timothy 2:13)*

All the things of daily life will be given to us, if we seek his kingdom first.
*Jesus said: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things
will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33)*

God will answer our prayers.

*If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it
will be given you. (John 15:7)*

When you read your Bible, you will discover more and more promises. Keep
them in your heart as a wonderful treasure given from Jesus to you.

**Please answer Test 9 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail,
WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.**

Test 9

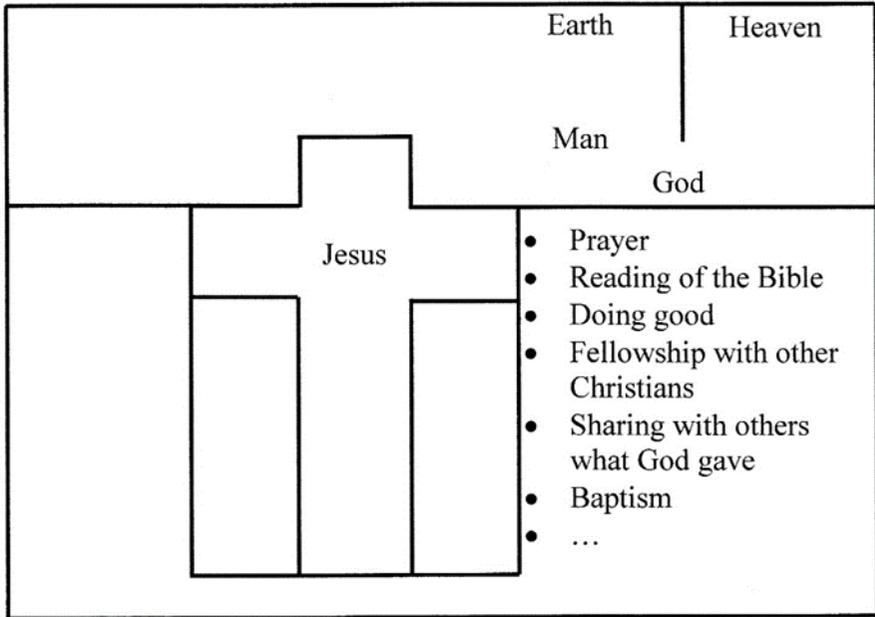
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. It is possible to become a child of God. | T | F |
| 2. God is very glad over one sinner who repents. | T | F |
| 3. For a born again Christian, the physical death is just the gate from this life with God to eternal life with him. | T | F |
| 4. My salvation stands mainly on what I have done. | T | F |
| 5. Our Christian life should be based on feeling. | T | F |
| 6. God’s promises are the only guarantee for our salvation. | T | F |
| 7. In the Bible there is no promise regarding forgiveness of sins. | T | F |
| 8. The best way to fight doubt is to fix your eyes on the promises of the Bible. | T | F |
| 9. We can know if we are going to heaven or not. | T | F |
| 10. Nothing can separate us from the love of God if we are in Jesus. | T | F |

Lesson 10

A wonderful relationship with God and other Christians

14th Illustration:



Have a look at illustration No. 12. At the right side there are several things written, which a child of God should do. For example pray, read the Bible, do good, have fellowship with true Christians, share with others what God has given, be baptised (by the way, the Bible never speaks about baptism of babies, only of those who accepted the Lord)... . Are you surprised to read this, after we explained to you before that those things cannot save us? They will certainly not bring us to heaven, but they will be the normal expression of a Christian life.

We'll give you a simple example. Somebody who is a Cadet and wants to become a Captain might struggle hard in order to reach his goal. Once he is a Captain he still does many things, but not so that he can become a Captain. Because he is already one, he is just acting like a Master. It is similar with a true Christian. He will do all those things you can see on the illustration, but not to become saved. He is already a child of God; therefore he does it as an expression of his Christian life. ***We are not saved by good works, but they will be the result of our salvation.*** You might ask yourself if God demands many hard and difficult things after he has saved a person.

No - what he expects is not difficult, but just normal. Why is this the case?

1. Prayer

Please remember what a new-born Christian is. He is a child of God, loved by his father. As every good human father desires close relationship with his children, so God with us. To pray is not a hard rule, which we have to fulfil. It just means to talk with God in a very personal way. Therefore it is much better if you don't just repeat again and again prayers which others wrote down. Better to tell him what is on your heart. Praise him for what he is. Thank him for what he gave you. Bring your problems and sorrows to him. He will care and answer. Confess your sins, and he will forgive. To pray daily is not a hard rule, because a true Christian loves to talk with his Father in Heaven.

2. Reading the Bible

Reading the Bible means to give God the opportunity to talk with me. A seaman cannot talk every day with his children because of his job. But his desire is to do so. And maybe you even spend a lot of money to talk with them by phone once in a while. Even more God wants to listen to our prayers and speak to us through his word. He wants to comfort, encourage, teach, advise and guide you. Through the Bible you get to know him better and better. A Christian usually loves to read the word of God. It is like a communication of two persons: When you pray, you talk with God; when you read the Bible, the Lord talks to you

God remains faithful, even if we are sometimes faithless.

3. Fellowship with other true Christians

Acts 2:42:

The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

The early Christians loved the teaching of the word of God, prayer and fellowship with other Christians. It never came into their minds that it is something difficult, or that they must follow hard and boring rules.

Acts 4:32-33:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

Why it is important for you to look for fellowship with other Christians? This is the place where the children of God meet each other and worship their Saviour. If you are not in a church with much spiritual life like you read in the book of Acts, look for such a group. Ask God in prayer to guide you to find the right one.

4. Sharing your gifts with others

1 Corinthians 12:12-30:

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body.

If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment.

But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honour to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

If one part is suffering, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church [Christian fellowship] God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Paul compares the fellowship of true Christians with a body. Different members have different gifts. All receive something, and all share what they got from God. They share their spiritual and material gifts with each others.

5. To keep the commandments of God

A child of God loves to keep his commandments because he loves his Father. The heart is full of gratitude towards Jesus because of all that he has done for us. It might happen that a Christian struggles with some sins, but his desire is to follow the footsteps of Jesus. Please read *John 14:15-21*. A person who has realised that his sin caused Jesus to suffer so much can't easily disobey God anymore. He will always try to do good in order to please the Lord.

Please answer Test 10 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 10

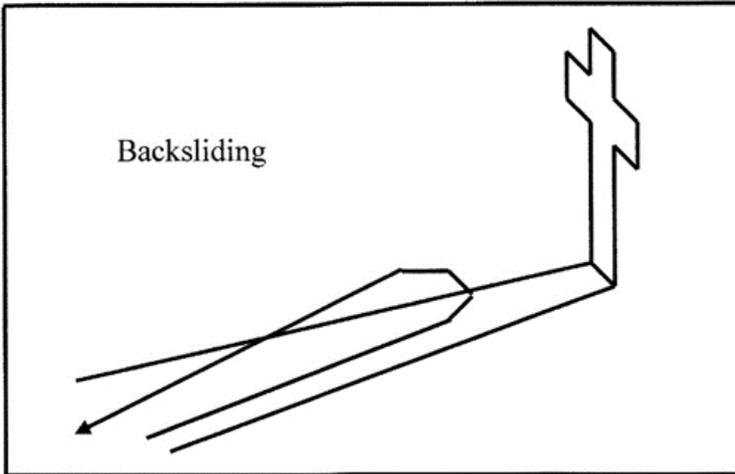
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. God expects us to do many difficult things once we are born again, which we have to do on our own. | T | F |
| 2. Good works are not the reason, but are the result of salvation. | T | F |
| 3. Good works are the normal expression of a Christian life. | T | F |
| 4. God loves fellowship with his children. | T | F |
| 5. God loves it when we repeat the same prayers daily. | T | F |
| 6. If I read the Bible, I get to know God better. | T | F |
| 7. The apostles sometimes forgot to testify the resurrection of Jesus Christ. | T | F |
| 8. A true Christian doesn't need so much fellowship with other believers because God is with him. | T | F |
| 9. We only have to share the spiritual gifts with each other. To help others with material needs is not important in the eyes of God. | T | F |
| 10. It is up to us whether we keep God's commandments or not. He does not care much, because Jesus always forgives. | T | F |

Lesson 11

Backsliding

13th Illustration:



What is backsliding? Am I already a backslider when I sin once? No, this is not the case. Even a sincere Christian is still not perfect. He needs the forgiveness of Jesus daily. But a person is in danger of sliding back when he hesitates to repent immediately. If somebody - after he has become a child of God - allows the devil to regain control over his life, then he brings himself into a dangerous position.

How does a person know that he is in danger of becoming a backslider?

There are different signs:

- He will lose his joy and his peace of heart. Remember with how much joy the first Christians met together. In *John 14:27* Jesus promises to give us inner peace, independent of the circumstances.

Jesus said: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

However this is not the case if we remain in our sin and refuse to repent.

- The fruit of the Holy Spirit will stop to grow in his life.

Galatians 5:22-23: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentle-ness and self-control.

Realise the wonderful things he will give you and the development of your Christian life, which will happen. But a backslider will not see much fruit of the Spirit in his life.

- If the heart is no longer burning, if there is not much love for Jesus and the brothers and sisters, if it is divided and not fully committed to Jesus, then backsliding has already started.

Revelation 3:15-16:

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm – neither hot nor cold – I will spit you out of my mouth.

What are the reasons of backsliding?

- Sin which is not confessed to the Lord. The big problem is not to stumble and fall, but to remain standing. Some people hesitate to repent of their sins to Jesus, because they feel ashamed that they are still so weak. But we should come with great confidence to Jesus, who is able and willing to forgive every day what we have done wrong.
- Others start to take it easy with sin. But to disobey God wilfully is very dangerous. He will not forgive, if we don't mean it sincerely. Please read the complete *Psalms 51*. King David wrote these words, after he became very guilty. Make this Psalm your own prayer if you feel the burden of sin in your life.

Psalms 51: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me and I will be clean, wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Save me from bloodguilt, O God - the God who saves me - and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

Matthew 6:14-15:

If you forgive men when they sin against you, your Father in heaven will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

- Lack of fellowship with God.

John 15:4-5:

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch bears fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Jesus does not expect anything from us other than to remain close to him. He even said that we can do nothing without him. It is not our part to produce fruit, but to remain close to Jesus. Then he will do it in us. Don't struggle to present God a good life. Better to allow him to take over and to change you. Be very honest to him, and just bring him your weakness.

Take a piece of paper and write the following short sentence on it: **“FOR THIS I HAVE JESUS”**. What does it mean? **“FOR THIS”** means: For my sin, my fear, my burdens, my weaknesses, my homesickness, my problems... **“I HAVE JESUS”**. It does not mean that Jesus takes away all problems, but that he will be with you. Fix this sentence at a place where you often look. It will help you to be reminded and your faith will be strengthened. To be close to Jesus is the only way to be protected from backsliding. To come back to Jesus is the only way to make a new start after backsliding. Jesus is merciful and gracious. He is willing and able to bring you to his destiny. The longer you know him, the more you will realise that you are dependent on him. Without him, we can really do nothing. He is our only hope and chance.

According to *1 Corinthians 1:30* Jesus is our salvation **and** holiness. He wants to save you **and** wants to keep you close to him, so that you will grow spiritually.

It is because of God that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God – that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Please answer Test 11 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

Test 11

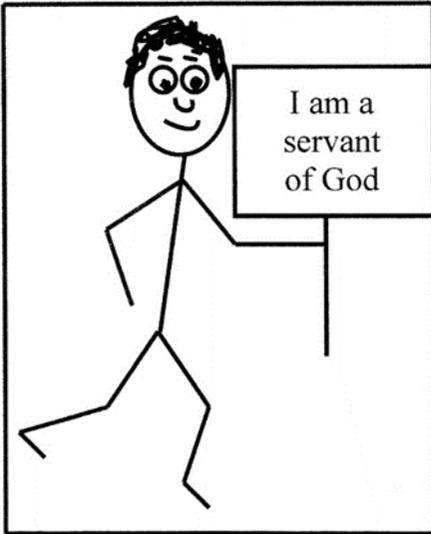
Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. A backslider still has the peace of God in his heart. | T | F |
| 2. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. | T | F |
| 3. A person is in danger of becoming a backslider when he hesitates to repent immediately after he has sinned. | T | F |
| 4. The big problem is not to stumble and fall (to sin), but to remain on the ground. | T | F |
| 5. King David didn't sin much in his life. | T | F |
| 6. If we don't forgive the sin of others, God will not forgive us. | T | F |
| 7. Lack of fellowship with God is one reason for backsliding. | T | F |
| 8. We have to struggle hard in our own strength to present God a good life. | T | F |
| 9. Jesus wants to give us a life without any problems. | T | F |
| 10. To remain close to Jesus is the only way to be protected from backsliding and to return after backsliding. | T | F |

Lesson 12

To be a servant of God

14th Illustration:



Everybody prefers to be the master and not the servant. But I can tell you that it is something wonderful to be a servant of God.

Philippians 2:5-11:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man. He humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on the cross.

This is really an amazing passage. Before Jesus requested us to become servants, he gave us an example. Though he had the

same nature as God the Father, he humbled himself in a way we can hardly imagine. Let us learn from Jesus - the King of Kings - what it means to serve.

John 13:4-5:

Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

John 13:12-15:

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for this is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

- Again others refuse to forgive their brothers and sisters. However this is very dangerous because their own sin will not be forgiven by God as well.

Why does God need servants?

God could do everything on his own, but he preferred to let us take part in building up his kingdom here on earth. Every child of God is to be a messenger of the Lord in words and actions. Both are necessary. We have to share the good news about Jesus Christ. The great gift of salvation is not only for us. We have to bring the gospel to all people.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21:

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

God has committed a message to all who are already saved, in order to tell it to those who are still in darkness. Paul considered himself an ambassador of Jesus. An ambassador is somebody who represents a nation in another country. God wants us to be his representatives. A true Christian does not belong any more to this world. His home is now with God. But we are still on earth to bring the good news of Jesus to the nations.

Matthew 28:18-20:

Jesus said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus said that we shall go and make disciples. Not everybody becomes a Pastor or employed Missionary, but all Christians should be fulltime witnesses of the Lord, wherever they are.

Jesus said: *"As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work"* (John 9:4)

To be a servant of Christ is a big privilege. He is really worthy that we devote our life completely to him. He has done everything for us, and we should not hesitate to give our life completely to him.

You have come now to the end of this course. Maybe you have already taken the step to receive Jesus in your heart. If this is the case, please inform us about it, so that we can help you to take the next steps. In case you have not yet taken the step, or you are not yet sure about it, feel free to ask us any questions, and we will try to help you.

If you have taken the step or not yet, carry on with the next Courses. Send us the exams from any place. But avoid mailing them from a country where the letters easily get lost. When we get your tests, we will mark and return them with a certificate and send the next course back to you. If you don't get any response from us, please write again and inform us about it. Sometimes letters don't reach us.

Please continue to study the courses wherever you are. Do them on the ship, at home and even when you join other vessels.

May God bless you as you continue to read his word.

Please answer Test 12 and return the results to me straight by E-Mail, WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION[®], NIV[®]

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.[®]

Used by Permission of Biblica, Inc.[®] All rights reserved worldwide.

Seamen's Christian Friend Society

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Registered Charity No. 209133

Founded 1846

A Company Limited by Guarantee

Registered in London

No. 378765

Test 12

Are the following statements “True” or “False” (Circle “T” or “F”)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. God wants all of us to be number one. | T | F |
| 2. Jesus gave us an example of being a servant. | T | F |
| 3. God wants to build his kingdom on his own. | T | F |
| 4. Every true Christian is to be a messenger in words alone. Actions are not so important. | T | F |
| 5. Every true believer want to share the good news of salvation through Christ to others. | T | F |
| 6. An ambassador of Christ represents him here on earth. | T | F |
| 7. Only the full-time Ministers (Pastors and Missionaries) should share the word of God. | T | F |
| 8. In <i>Matthew 28:18-20</i> Jesus said that we should preach the gospel to all nations. | T | F |
| 9. To be a servant of Christ is wonderful. | T | F |
| 10. Jesus has done everything for us and he is worthy that we devote our lives completely to him. | T | F |

Please tick **one** only and give an honest answer. If you are not yet sure of your salvation, please tell us so that we can help you further.

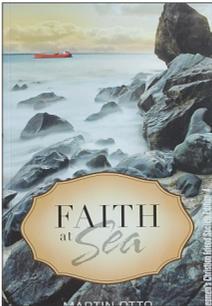
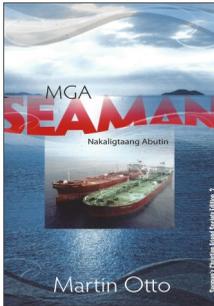
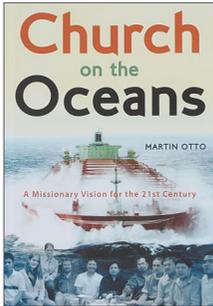
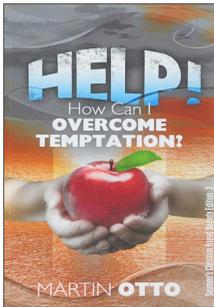
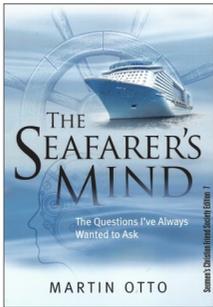
- Before I started this Course, I had already received Christ as my personal Saviour. I am already sure of my salvation.
- During the study of these lessons I have received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith. I am now sure of my salvation.
- I am very interested in being saved, but I need more information regarding the following subjects:
-

- I have already tried to ask Christ to come into my heart, but I am not yet sure if I am saved or not.
- I here and now receive the Lord Jesus as my Saviour. I know that I am saved.

Please order this exciting material!

Martin Otto * Hamburg * Germany
Mobile or WhatsApp: 0049 (0) 1793994456
E-Mail: scfs.martin.otto@gmx.de
Facebook: Martin Otto

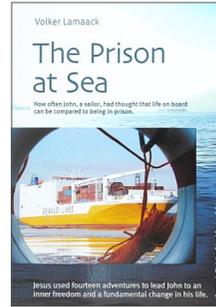
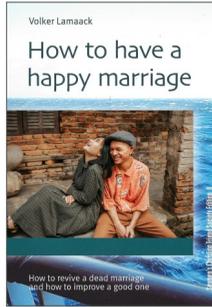
Books



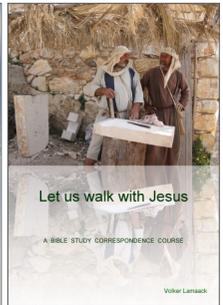
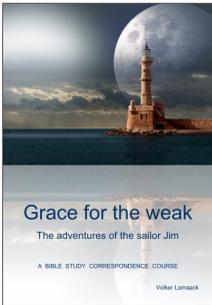
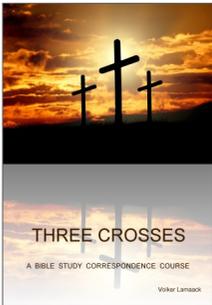
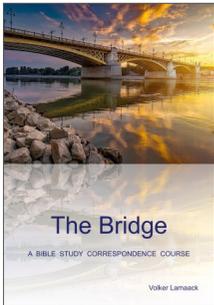
Please order this exciting material!

Volker Lamaack * Hamburg * Germany
Mobile / WhatsApp / Signal: 0049 (0) 1793994457
E-Mail: scfs.volker.lamaack@web.de
Facebook: Volker Lamaack

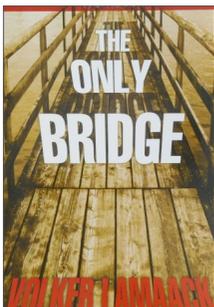
Books



Bible Study Correspondence Course



Study Material For Bible Groups

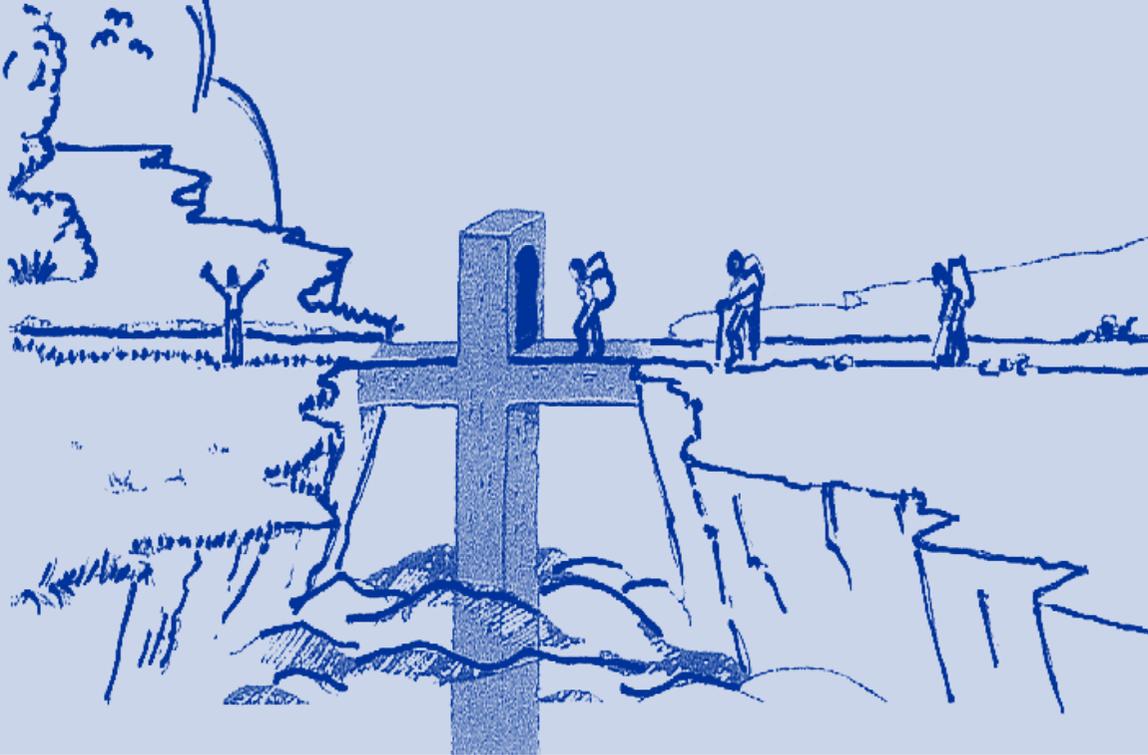


Gospel Flyer



Gospel Booklet





Please return the tests to:

Volker Lamaack

Hamburg / Germany

Mobile / WhatsApp: 0049 (0) 1793994457

Signal: 0049 (0) 1793994457

E-Mail: scfs.volker.lamaack@web.de

Facebook: Volker Lamaack

Web-Site: www.scfs.org

Martin Otto

Hamburg / Germany

0049 (0) 1793994456

scfs.martin.otto@gmx.de

Martin Otto

www.scfs.org

Volker Lamaack

- * Married to Doris
- * Three children
- * Since 1991 Missionary for Seamen
in the Port of Hamburg / Germany



Seamen's Christian Friend Society

Incorporating the Merchant Navy Christian Fellowship
Registered Charity No. 209133 A Company Limited by Guarantee
Founded 1846 Registered in London No. 378765

