

# Steps to God

## NUMBERS ONE AND TWO

Everywhere man is restive. Dissatisfaction and discontent mark man's course through life. Man is not able to find that which will give him peace of mind and satisfaction—that which by nature he feels the need of, even though he knows not why.

Even among the savages we find the natural instinct of worship. Though he be ignorant of the methods, yet the very fact is that he realizes there is a higher Being to whom he is in some way responsible. Where did man get that inward instinct of worship?

God has given the answer. He “. . . hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, . . . that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.” Acts 17:26, 27. Here we have it: God's purpose in the creation of man was that he should seek the Lord (his Maker). Yes, and find Him! Through God's love we have the privilege of being called the sons of God. 1 John 3:1. In the Garden of Eden God talked with man and was very close to him, but after sin entered man's heart, and the curse of death passed upon all men, God found it necessary to remain apart from him who had been created in His own image.

### **What Separates Man From God?**

“But your iniquities (sins) have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you . . .” Isaiah

59:2. Man's sins have separated him from his Maker and as long as man is thus separated, he is restive. God made man so. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Isaiah 57:21. Man's soul constantly cries out for God. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul,..." Lamentations 3:24. Sinful pleasures and the gathering together of material gain, will not satisfy that God-given longing. Man is mortal and his being longs for immortality, therefore he cannot have peace within until he is assured of receiving eternal life. "...we are saved by hope." Romans 8:24. And we cannot have that hope until our sins are forgiven and we have peace with God. To obtain this assurance three steps are needful according to the Gospel. (1) Faith, (2) Repentance and (3) Baptism. Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15, 16; Romans 5:1-2. We shall consider only the first two steps in this leaflet. Please write for Step No. 3—Baptism.)

#### **Faith**

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1. Here is the Bible definition of faith. Study it closely. Faith is not sight. "...we walk by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7. "No man hath seen God at any time..." John 1:18. We have not seen God and yet, "...without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Hebrews 11:6.

A study of the heavens and nature itself teaches us that God exists. Psalm 19:17. True faith must go farther than that, for we must believe that He will reward us if we diligently seek Him. How can we obtain faith in a God we have not seen? "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10:17. Notice it is not by some wise man's ideas that

faith comes, but by the Word of God. Christ says, "Search the scriptures..." John 5:39. Paul says the Scriptures were given by inspiration of God and are able to make us wise unto salvation "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15.

The proof of its inspiration is found in the Bible itself. The fulfillment of the many prophecies written from 1900 to 2600 years ago proves conclusively that the Bible is God's Word. Is not your salvation worth enough to you to make a serious investigation? God has not left us to guess the way.

Christ came to earth and died for our sins. Hebrews 2:9. This gospel (good news) of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth..." Romans 1:16. "Therefore being justified (made just) by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1, 2. Paul sums up this gospel briefly in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5. Please read it carefully, also Romans 5:5-12.

Again Paul says, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession (of Christ) is made unto salvation." Romans 10:10. Faith from the heart means obedience to the terms of the Gospel. Romans 10:16. Christ is to take vengeance on them that "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thessalonians 1:8.

After conversion, we must keep our faith as a shield against Satan's temptations. Ephesians 6:16.

### **Repentance**



Notice in Acts 2:37, 38 that those Jews being convicted of their sins and convinced that Jesus was the Christ, said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sin..." They had been convinced of the truth of the

gospel and Peter tells them their next step is repentance, for Christ said, "Expect ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3.

#### **What Is True Repentance?**

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation . . ." 2 Corinthians 7:10. This godly sorrow for our sins is brought about by the conviction of the Holy Spirit of God, which reproves us. John 16:7-9. We have an example of true repentance before God in the prayer of the publican. Luke 18:13, 14. He humbly bowed his head and prayed, ". . . God be merciful to me a sinner." No self-righteousness here; he realized that only God could save. Repentance means not only confession of guilt to God, but restitution to our neighbor, where possible to do so. Zacchaeus is a fair example: "... Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Luke 19:8. "If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. David shows true repentance. "I will declare (confess) mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sins." Psalm 38:18. In repentance, we must be converted (changed). "Repent ye . . . and be converted . . ." Acts 3:19.

God hears the repentant prayer that comes from the heart desiring pardon and freedom from sinful habits, if we believe the gospel. He accepts our repentance when we come in faith. He commands, ". . . Be baptized, and wash away thy sins . . ." Acts 22:16.

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