

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32

*“God gives us richly all things to enjoy.”
Timothy 6:17*

God doesn't deny us anything that is for our good. Rather sin and separation from God deprive us of what is good, our sin and that of our forebearers all the way back to Adam. Yet to that we cling in preference to Him!

In this foolish world, hurting because of sin, God seeks to give us first and most what is most important and most curative. He seeks to give us first Himself in a right relationship, an ever-growing, expanding, loving, fulfilling relationship with Him. This we need more than everything else that we could possibly ask for combined.

“Christ in You, the Hope of Glory”

As Romans 8:32 tells us, with Christ and in Christ, God gives us all things. He in us is our hope of transformation from glory to glory. He is the author and finisher of our faith. We are complete only in Him. Let's look nowhere else. Let's seek to receive nothing so much as more of Him.

Out of Him and His Spirit in us flow life, righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, redemption, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, hope, strength, and might. These and so much more flow to us from Him and through us to touch, help, and heal others.

Receptive to Him

By His enabling, let our attitude to Him be one of increasing receptivity in all things. Let us look not to ourselves, but to Him. Let there be in us less and less resistance to Him and what He provides. Whether He is providing love, grace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness, and cleansing, or correction, discipline, and chastening, let us become increasingly receptive to Him. Let us receive His strength and power, not just for the accomplishing of great feats for Him, but even more to enable us to suffer gladly for Him.

*“I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:11-13*

*“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and long-suffering with joy.”
Colossians 1:11*

Receiving Death to Receive Life

As we take time alone with Him with our hearts open and receptive to all He wants to give us, He'll begin to work an increasing hunger for Himself in us. He'll also develop in us a growing willingness to die to our independent selves so we may live to Him. Primarily occurring during times of devotional prayer, this process also transpires in the quiet of our hearts and spirits alone with Him throughout the day.

We'll find ourselves refusing more of the things held out to us so attractively by the world, the flesh, and the devil. We'll refuse them so we may receive gladly more of what He holds out to us, whether attractive or unattractive to our old man.

To receive of His fullness we must become increasingly willing to let go of all that usurps His place in our hearts and lives. To receive Him initially and His wondrous gift of personal salvation, we had to let go of our sin, prideful independence, and hope in ourselves or in anything other than Him. Just so must we be doing constantly to receive more of Him and His salvation in ever expanding dimensions in our lives.

But, more than this, we need to let go of our right to control things and people, even to control our own affairs. In short, we need to let Him be in charge.

I'm not, of course, suggesting being irresponsible or uninvolved. But, tell me, what could be assuming greater responsibility than to get out of His way so the One who is infinitely capable can take charge? That is the best kind of responsible involvement. Moreover, we know that the infinitely capable One who is in charge in His infinite wisdom will certainly tell us if, when, and how we should participate in His doing.

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By: Pastor Ron Marr

“He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” John 1:11-12

This may seem a strange point at which to introduce this favorite salvation verse. But stick with me, and I think you'll see how beautifully it fits.

God's Way of Personal Salvation

First, what if just one reader has never really received the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Savior from the guilt and penalty of sin? The God who loves us all sent His sinless Son to die on the awful cross for our eternal salvation. He took our sins and punishment on Himself, making it possible for God to forgive all our sins, even the worst, so we can escape the eternal punishment that otherwise awaits us all as surely as we breathe, and we can live in bliss with Him forever. All we have to do is turn from our sin and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

What if you are that one reader? What if you were to miss it all? What if you were to spend eternity in hell? What if it were because I failed to urge on you the need of making absolutely sure you're depending on Jesus alone for your eternal salvation?

No, my friend, that mustn't happen. I owe you that. If you really don't know Him, I urge you to tell Him you've sinned against Him, you deserve His punishment of your sins, and you receive Him as your Savior now. Ask Him to come into your heart and begin the glorious transformation that He alone can make in your life.

To Profess Is Not Necessarily To Possess

Some may wonder if any would have read this far without knowing the Lord and His eternal salvation. Perhaps not, but one of those dear people the Lord has ministered to through me phoned to ask, “What does it mean to be born again?” In her instance, I had no doubt but that she really

JUST BEING RECEPTIVE

knew the Savior. She just couldn't stand her imperfection! What better witness could there be that the convicting Spirit lived in her?

However, another instance was different. A husband shared with me his concern about his wife's unresponsiveness to spiritual matters. She'd accepted the Lord at the same time he had years earlier. Now, she didn't even want to go to church. It seemed to be a new idea to him that perhaps she hadn't received the Lord at all and she was just reflecting her unconverted heart by her actions. True, she seemed to grow spiritually in those early days. But had she really been born again? Had she been a spiritual baby growing or were her changed interests just reflecting her husband's changed life and the new church and friends?

Examine your heart, my friend. Be sure you are His. How? Well, perhaps answering these questions as honestly as you can will give you your answer: Do you have any hope other than the Lord Jesus Christ alone for your eternal salvation? Do you think things such as church attendance, trying hard, or being as good as anyone else earn you merit with God? Have you seen yourself as the sinner you are, or do you really think you're kind of a nice person, certainly not a bad one?

There is nothing like a good dose of self-righteousness to keep people out of heaven! The Lord only saves sinners. Do you qualify?

True Stories

My sister, Bernice Callaway, asked our dear maternal grandmother whether she was the Lord's. Grandma replied that she had received the Lord when she was a child. Still, we remained skeptical. She just didn't seem comfortable with the things of God or the people of God.

Quite a number of years later, at the age of 83, Grandma was lying on what she thought was her death bed. There she asked the Lord to be her Savior. In the next ten years before she went home, she listened constantly to Christian radio broadcasts. Her Bible never left her bedside. She really was different.

After having received the Lord at nine years of age, I was plagued by occasional doubts about my salvation for years. If I were really His, wouldn't my life be more

pleasing to Him? One day, after I was in full-time Christian service, I was telling someone that, to be sure of our salvation, we need to just cast ourselves on the Lord. We need to stretch ourselves completely out on Christ Jesus as on a hand over a flaming pit, for He is our only hope of being kept out of those flames.

Amazingly, from then on I've never really doubted my salvation. I had accepted Jesus as my only hope and found no need of anything more. My hope had come to rest in Him alone.

Know this: if Jesus doesn't save us, we'll never be saved. We can rest in Him and forget our doubts. Praise His name!

Only the Beginning

We think of John 1:12 as an invitation to a one-time decision to receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Truly it is.

But that one-time receiving Christ is also our invitation to constant receiving. With that one-time decision we become children of God, but what do babies do once born? They receive nourishment, protection, warmth, cleansing, and love. Without receiving, they could give nothing back, not even the only thing they have to give, the expression of their own need that we see as affection. They'd die.

We're Constantly Receiving

We don't seem to recognize it, but we're constantly receiving from the good hand of God. We couldn't live another instant if we didn't receive life and breath from His sustaining hand. Everything we have or are, we have received from Him, including our abilities to think, to feel, and to choose, our five physical senses, and in a secondary manner all that results from these gifts He has bestowed on us. We couldn't make or acquire anything without the body, mind, and abilities He's given us applied to the material things He's put in this world.

Spiritual Receptivity Is Key

We've described our spiritual life in many different ways. Here's another: a Christianity that really works is one of receptivity to God. If only we knew enough to be just good receivers.

We have nothing to bring to our relationship with God except ourselves in our need. All we have is what He created, and this we've defiled, damaged, and defaced. Even this we wouldn't bring to Him, we couldn't bring to Him, except the Father drew us. So, the only thing we can do in a Christianity that works is be receptive by His enabling to Him.

To receive from God, we don't work. Instead, He draws us in

love. With the ability He gives, we respond to His loving drawing. He gives us the gift of faith, and with that faith we trust Him. He shows us we have nowhere else to rely, and only then do we begin to depend on Him. He looks on us with love, and we're drawn to look to Him. He teaches us there is peace nowhere else but in His rest, and we learn to find our rest and peace in Him.

He brings us to see that anything we thought we had is totally inadequate to meet our needs. Only then do we at last begin to come to Him, wait on Him, look to Him, trust Him, depend on Him, rest content in Him, abide and reside in Him, and receive from Him all we need of His all-sufficient mercy, grace, and abundant supply.

We have only to remain in Him, at peace in the place where we were made always to be. At no point does this change, nor should this seem strange. Our Creator designed us this way from the beginning!

Another Way?

What other way could we possibly want than to be forever in the hand of our perfect, all-powerful, loving Father God and Savior, always receiving everything we need from Him? What other way? Pause and think it through. What other way?

You know, don't you? Your way. My way. Our own foolish, self-centered, independent ways. Our destructive ways. Our painful ways. Our ways.

How absurd! How absolutely unbelievable that we should try to depend on ourselves, to seek to be our own supply, we who ultimately have nothing except what our God gives us. How incredible that we should refuse His inexhaustible supply, preferring to try to be our own.

When we do, we're thieves and liars, claiming as our own what came from God's hand in the first place. You see, there's nothing that is that didn't! So we have nothing of our own. Nothing!

Our Foolish Misconception

The world, the flesh, and the devil have misled us into believing that God is in the business of taking away from us, of depriving us. Sure He is! He deprives us of our burden of sin, its guilt, its slavery, and its eternal punishment. God seeks to strip us of all that is harmful, hurtful, and destructive. But He is really in the business of giving to us.