

Ephesians 4:22-24 -- *That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. (Examples follow in 4:25 through 5:10).*

Colossians 3:9-10 -- *Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him. (This is in the middle of examples ranging from 3:5 to 3:17.)*

Romans 12:1-2 -- *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

God does not ignore the sin that separated one from God to begin with, but rather, He gives one instruction to go about changing back to the original man, Jesus Christ, being our perfect example.

This does not mean, however, as some charge, that man achieves salvation on his own just by following the directions. Even if one did this perfectly (which no one has but Jesus), it would still be a gift. Rather, God knowing how difficult it is to be perfect, sent His Son to make up the difference. This is called "justification." To help understand this term, look at the edges of this page. The margin is what the text of typing has been justified to. The margin is like the standard of perfection God wants one to attain to, but we all fall short. Through God's Law of Faith (Romans 3:27), and the sacrifice of His Son, even when one's efforts do not reach to the edge, God can make those efforts look as if they did.

To those who think that one has only to believe, without any works, the term "justify" cannot possibly apply, even as one has to type something on the line to make it possible to be justified. Even in the passage often referred to as proof that one does not have to do any work (See Ephesians 2:8-10 at the top of the next page), the "works" are the works of the Law (Romans 3:27-28), which are different from the "good works" used in verse ten.

Ephesians 2:8-10 -- *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

SALVATION AS A PROCESS

Why salvation needs to be described as a "process" is because it has the aspects of being attained immediately, but also only at its completion. This sounds paradoxical, but many things operate along these lines. People have been saved from drowning by being taken into a boat and one might say at that point they are "saved." Yet that boat still has to make it to shore with them in it, so one waits in anticipation for complete salvation. There is still the possibility of one either falling overboard or even diving back in.

God's grace is much like that boat. One can accept God's gift and at that moment be considered saved, meeting the minimum requirements as one reborn. Yet at some point they can be either lured back into the world, or they can even jump back in (See Matthew 13:20-21, The Parable of the Sower). As long as one is doing what is pleasing to God, one can be considered saved and justified, and thus they have hope. But they are not really assured until life is over. Paul uses himself as an example of this. To the church at Philippi, he wrote that he had not attained to the resurrection of the dead, but still pressed on to the upward call (Philippians 3:12-16). Yet when he had reached the end of his life and was about to die, he could write that he had "fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

By this process he can tell the Corinthians that they are already "saved," but it is only "if" they hold fast to the word preached to them (1 Cor. 15:1-2). Writing of himself...

1 Corinthians 9:27 -- *But I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.*

Paul also uses the term "saved" in another way - as a *participle*. To the Corinthians he writes that Christians are "the ones being saved." They are the ones in the process of being saved (durative, constant action in Greek), as opposed to "the ones who are perishing" (1 Corinthians 1:18). In Philippians, the apostle states that one is to work on their salvation.