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**“You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant...”**

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

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## **Real Christianity - Why You Should Consider It And How to Become a Member of God's Family - Forever**

by Robert C. Benson, President

### **Introduction**

*“The scientists’ religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.”* Albert Einstein

Max Dupree, former President and Chairman of the Board of Herman Miller Corporation said, *“The first responsibility of leadership is to define reality,”* so allow me to share Real Christianity with you, a relationship with God, not a religion. I have experienced the facts outlined in this article for over 50 years and I can testify that they do define reality. And, for those interested in growing spiritually or building a Kingdom business, understanding of this information is imperative to your success. Following is the Apostle Peter's summary of spiritual growth, *“So make every effort to apply the benefits of these promises to your life. Then your faith will produce a life of moral excellence. A life of moral excellence leads to knowing God better. Knowing God leads to self-control. Self-control leads to patient endurance, and patient endurance leads to godliness. Godliness leads to love for other Christians, and finally you will grow to have genuine love for everyone”* (2 Peter 1:5-8 NLT).

The Bible (God's operating manual for humans) says that life on this earth is short, *“All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever”* (Isaiah 40: 6&8). The Bible also says that life is a test to see who can be trusted with imperishable bodies in Heaven. *“There are bodies in the heavens, and there are bodies on earth...The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the beauty of the earthly bodies. It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die. Our bodies now disappoint us, but when they are raised, they will be full of glory. They are weak now, but when they are raised, they will be full of power. They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, so also there are spiritual bodies”* (1 Corinthians. 15:40-44 NLT).

The most important question in your short lifetime on this earth is “What are you going to believe about God and the next life?” This article outlines what the Bible says is the way to spend the next life with Him, in His Kingdom, as a member of His family. **If you truly want to understand Real Christianity, please take time to read the whole article. Why? Because Real Christianity offers you life forever with God in Heaven through an act of God’s grace. In all other religions YOU must control your behavior and work your way to Heaven, a mission impossible! “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” (John 6:29)**

Many “intellectuals” in educational institutions and others across the world today would have you believe there is no God. However, consider that Albert Einstein, one of the most brilliant individuals of all time clearly believed there is a God. Any intellectually honest person who examines the facts has to come to “*a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law*” and come to a conclusion that there is a God. The Bible says that people who don’t believe in God are fools, “*The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God’*” (Psalms 14:1). Therefore, let us examine together some truth about God and how to spend eternity with Him in His Kingdom.

This is the third issue of a new and separate ABA newsletter, *The Spirit Led Business*<sup>™</sup>, providing insight on building a Kingdom of God business – a company led by a person who in turn is led by the Spirit of God. If you are offended by these articles, you can unsubscribe from this newsletter below. However, if you are adventurous and interested in knowing more about the amazing journey of walking with God, stick around for a few months and decide for yourself what you think.

## **Part I**

### **Situational Analysis**

#### **The Disappointment with Our “Natural Human Bodies”**

*“I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.”*

Romans 7:15-20

Humans, all humans, have a condition creating weaknesses in their self control and causing them to die. This condition is called “sin.” You may think sin is a verb, something a person does. The word is often used that way, but in the Bible verses above, the Apostle Paul uses the word sin as a noun – something “living in” him. As it is, this sin living in you is a fatal condition passed from generation to generation. And, it creates weaknesses in every person’s human nature referred to by Paul as the “*sinful nature*” (meaning a nature that can’t help but sin.)

The Greek Philosopher, Plato, said, “*If you would converse with me, please, first, define your terms.*” So first, let’s define the word “sin.” Following is how dummies.com defines it: “*Sin* is any deliberate action, attitude, or thought that goes against God. You may think of sin as an obvious act, such as murder, marital unfaithfulness, or theft. Although that's true, sin is also wrongdoing that's far subtler and even unnoticeable at times, such as pride, envy, or even worry. Sin includes both things you shouldn't have done, but did (*sins of commission*) and

things you should've done, but didn't (*sins of omission*).” The online dictionary defines sin as: “A transgression of a religious or moral law, especially when deliberate...Deliberate disobedience to the known will of God...A condition of estrangement from God resulting from such disobedience.

These definitions are traditional and represent how most people think about sin – as something that we do or don't do. But there is something more important to understand about the word sin! The Bible also uses the word “sin” as a noun, to describe a “thing”, living in you, resulting in a condition called “sin” in your human nature that **you** can't control! These simple but profound insights, about the word sin which I learned after being a Christian for over 30 years, revolutionized my understanding of the Bible, clarified what Jesus Christ did at the cross, and set me free. The Apostle Paul confirms the truth of this condition in the Romans 7 quotation above, which includes, “***Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it***” (Romans 7:20).

So the next time you say to yourself or others “I don't understand why (fill in name) does those things”, now you know why! How did humans (referred to in the Bible as “man”) get into this situation? Following is a summary of the facts from the Bible:

- **First, God created humans without any flaws.** “*God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them...God saw all that he had made, and it was very good*” (Genesis 1:27&31).
- **Second, God gave man a command to protect them** “*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the 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 (physically and spiritually)’*” (Genesis 2:15-17).
- **Third, the devil tempted man to disobey God** “He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’ The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’ ‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’” (Genesis 3:1-5).
- **Fourth, man disobeyed God** “*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*”
- **Fifth, because of their disobedience, sin entered man** “*Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves*” (Genesis 3:6-7).
- **Six, because sin was now living in man, they were no longer trustworthy to live in God's Kingdom,** so they were banished from it “*And the LORD God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’ So the LORD God banished him 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 and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life*” (Genesis 3:22-24).
- **Seventh, sin is passed from generation to generation in all humans** “*...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men...*” (Romans 5:12).

As a result of this sin condition in our human nature, the Bible says that, “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23) and that “*the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 6:23). But we just defined reality as the mortality rate being 100%. So what death and life is the Apostle Paul, author of Romans, talking about? He is talking of spiritual death (separation from God in Heaven and His life giving power for eternity) and spiritual life (unity and fellowship with God in Heaven and connectedness to His life giving power for eternity.)

In Part II we will examine the solution for this condition Paul calls the sinful nature.

## **Part II**

### **God’s Solution for Our Disobedience and Sin Living in Us**

### **Become a Child of God and Be Set Free From the Sinful Nature**

*“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.”* John 3:3

No one escapes the reality of physical death on this earth. As most estate planners point out, the mortality rate in this life is 100%. But the Bible does say a person can find the “*tree of life,*” get past the “*guards*” to it, and escape spiritual death. Therefore, the key question is “how?”

As indicated previously, in Romans 7:17&20, sin is a noun, something that is living in us. Is Paul trying to avoid responsibility? No, put in context, he is using his own experience to define reality for us and help each person understand that through accepting Christ’s death at the Cross as payment for his/her sins (see definition above) and through daily faith in Jesus Christ, sin (the “thing” living in us) is rendered powerless. ***“Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God – through Jesus Christ our Lord!”*** The “*sin living in*” you is what the Bible calls a “*sinful nature*” and is why it says that “*all have sinned.*” With sin living in you, it is impossible for you not to sin (the verb). However, God is a god of justice, mercy, and grace; He had and has a plan in place for humans to be set free from their sinful nature. God gave his own Son Jesus Christ, King of His Kingdom, to come to earth and to die in your place to pay the penalty of death for your sins and to provide a solution for rendering your “sinful nature” powerless through daily faith in Christ.

You may be thinking “this all sounds very strange” and wonder, as many have over the centuries, why did Christ have to come to earth and die? As our creator, couldn’t God “just fix it?” Or why couldn’t Jesus just come to earth and “Wow” us into believing in Him? I will explain why God’s solution had to be done this way in the next issue of The Spirit Led Business™, *Christ’s Finished Work of Grace at the Cross – What Did it Do For You?* But for now, let’s look at what the Bible says about God’s solution.

***“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law (The Ten Commandments) was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit”*** (Romans 8:1-4).

*"I have been crucified with Christ (when he died for my sins at the cross) and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. **The life I live in the body** (my physical body with a sinful nature), **I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"** (Galatians 2:20-21).*

Of the world's adult population, 33% list Christianity as their religion and 76% of the adults in the U.S. list Christianity as their religious affiliation. Why? Because **Christianity is the only religion that promises to set you free from the sinful nature and give you eternal life in heaven through an act of God's grace** by believing in his Son Jesus Christ, King of God's Kingdom. **In all other religions YOU must control your behavior and work your way to heaven, a mission impossible!**

Many of those listing Christianity as their religion believe that they are a "Christian" because they were raised in a Christian home or attend a Christian church. Those are good things, but they do not make you a Christian. So let's look together at what the Bible, God's operating manual for humans, says about becoming a Christian. Going to church without God living in you is just being religious. You become a child of God and He becomes real and personal (relational) in your life when you invite Him into your life by believing in his Son, Jesus Christ. Before counting on God's help in this life, it would be wise to check and make sure you are a child of God, a "born again" Christian.

**Real Christianity as explained in the Bible is not a religion; it is a personal relationship with God.** God is a personal being and wants to be personally involved in your life. *"Jesus replied 'If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him'"* (John 14:23). Christ taught us in John, chapter 3, how to start this relationship. *"In reply Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.'" That is "born of...the Spirit (of God). Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit (in humans). For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

The Bible has much to say about how to establish and maintain such a relationship with God, including the benefits of the relationship. When a person puts their belief in Jesus Christ that person is "born" into God's family and at that time their personal relationship with God begins: *"Yet to all who received him (Christ), to those who believe 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"* (John 1:12). That is, your spirit is given life as was intended from the beginning of creation and God lives in you (your spirit) for eternity (forever, regardless of what kind of physical body your spirit lives in)!

Real Christianity is all based on being "born again" that is, being born into God's family. Consider the following dialog of this subject by The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

*"Jesus answered, 'I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again.' 'How can a grown man be born again?' Nicodemus asked. 'He certainly cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time!' 'I am telling you the truth,' replied Jesus, 'that no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. A person is born physically of human parents, but is born spiritually of the Spirit. Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again. The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit'"* (John 3:3-8 GNT).

*“For 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God” (John 3:16-21).*

What the Son of God is saying here is that the only way to Heaven is to be born again and once a person is born into God's family then, and only then, can a person see that **he/she receives eternal life in heaven only through a work of God's grace through belief in Jesus Christ.** The way to receive this gift is by believing in Jesus Christ! He is also saying that rejection of God's gift is a sin resulting in a condemnation of death (separation from God in Heaven and His life giving power for eternity). In other words, until you accept it by faith, you will not understand it!

In Part III we will examine the Enormous Benefits of Real Christianity.

### **Part III**

## **The Benefits of Real Christianity are Enormous Imperishable Heavenly Bodies That Will Never Die**

*“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, ‘All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.’ And this is the word that we preached to you.” 1 Peter 1:23-25*

So what is the Apostle Peter talking about? He is referring to the new imperishable bodies that those who are born again will receive in the next life. Following is a discussion by the Apostle Paul:

*“Now let me remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then and still do now, for your faith is built on this wonderful message. And it is this Good News that saves you if you firmly believe it...I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me — that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles” (1 Corinthians 15:1-8 NLT).*

*“But the fact is that Christ has been raised from the dead. He has become the first of a great harvest of those who will be raised to life again. So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, Adam, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man, Christ. Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But all who are related to Christ, the other man, will be given new life” “But someone may ask, ‘How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?’” What a foolish question!*

*There are bodies in the heavens, and there are bodies on earth. The glory of the heavenly bodies is different from the beauty of the earthly bodies. It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies, which die and decay, will be different when they are resurrected, for they will never die.”*

*Our bodies now disappoint us, but when they are raised, they will be full of glory. They are weak now, but when they are raised, they will be full of power. They are natural human bodies now, but when they are raised, they will be spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, so also there are spiritual bodies. The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, Adam, became a living person." But the last Adam — that is, Christ — is a life-giving Spirit. What came first was the natural body, then the spiritual body comes later. Adam, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while Christ, the second man, came from heaven. Every human being has an earthly body just like Adam's, but our heavenly bodies will be just like Christ's. Just as we are now like Adam, the man of the earth, so we will someday be like Christ, the man from heaven. What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These perishable bodies of ours are not able to live forever. For our perishable earthly bodies must be transformed into heavenly bodies that will never die” (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 35-36a, 40, 42-50 and 53 NLT).*

Yes, our earthly bodies do disappoint us. They are weak, sickly, and dysfunctional. And they get weaker, sicker, and more dysfunctional as they age. Eventually they die. So who does the Bible say can be trusted with these heavenly bodies - bodies that are powerful, are never sick and never die? Those who trust and obey God *“Here is my final conclusion: Fear God and obey his commands, for this is the duty of every person. God will judge us for everything we do, including every secret thing, whether good or bad”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 NLT).

In Part IV you are encouraged to “Choose Life”

## **Part IV**

### **“I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses” “Now Choose Life”**

*“See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you...This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose Life...”* Deuteronomy 30:15-16a and 19

Hopefully I have given you a clearer and more practical understanding of Christianity – Real Christianity. We all know that some decisions in life are significantly more important than others. So ask yourself these questions: Can I honestly stand before God someday and claim I have never broken His law, The Ten Commandments? How do I know I will go to heaven when I die? On what basis do I know for sure?” If your answers are not consistent with the path to eternal life the Son of God has outlined above, you have three choices:

1. By faith, begin a personal relationship with God right where you are. John 1:12 says *“Yet to all who received him (the Lord Jesus Christ), to those who believe 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.”* Pray to the Lord Jesus Christ,

tell Him you believe that He is the Son of God, thank Him for dying for your sins, ask Him to make Himself known to you, and invite Him into your life as Savior and Lord. Then, to help your spiritual development, start reading the book of John in the Bible.

2. Check out Real Christianity further. In this case I recommend you start attending a church that teaches and preaches from the Bible on a weekly basis. If you want church recommendations, please give me a call. Also, to help your understanding, start reading the book of John in the Bible.
3. Reject what I have taught you in this newsletter. Please think about this very carefully, according to the Bible, your life depends on it.

If you don't have a Bible, you can go online to [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org) and click on Net Bible. Then click on Online NETBible and go to the upper left corner where it says Display Bible. Scroll to John and click on Go. And if you want someone to talk to about the things in this letter, call us at ABA!

The next issue of The Spirit Led Business™ will be about **Real Christianity, Christ's Finished Work of Grace at the Cross and What it Did For You.**

Note: All Bible verses are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.  
GNT = Good News Translation. NLT = New Living Translation.

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