



Costs and Benefits of Faith in Jesus

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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

(Hyperlinks are surrounded by parenthesis and are underlined.)

Introduction

This lesson provides evaluative truths regarding the costs and benefits of Christianity—which is intended for:

- Those who are considering accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. For Jesus declared, “**For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it.**” Luke 14:28
- Christians who are going through tough times, and need to refocus their faith upon Jesus. “**Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.**” Hebrews 12:1-2

Every decision we make involves a cost and benefit analysis—which occurs multiple times throughout each day. Depending upon the severity of the cost, our cost/benefit analysis can range from a quick subconscious evaluation (what to eat), to a complete financial analysis (when buying a very expensive item). We decide to do something when the benefits exceed the costs, or we should decide not to do something when the costs exceed the benefits.

A cost is what we will “pay” to obtain benefits (improvements in our lives) from something we are considering. In addition, a cost and benefit may result in a decrease or increase in money, time, risk, consequences, and so forth.

Costs and benefits also influence us within the spiritual realm. For example, how we respond to a sinful temptation depends upon the focus of our cost/benefit analysis—which is driven by the degree of our heart’s desire to fulfill our flesh or magnify our faith.

- **Flesh:** Sin’s influence is increased as we continue to focus upon the fleshly benefits (lies).
- **Faith:** Sin’s influence is decreased when we recognize we are being tempted, pray and transition our focus upon all of the:
 - Prior spiritual costs we experienced because of the sin.
 - The spiritual costs we will experience if we sin.
 - Spiritual benefits of overcoming.

It is important to note that the perception of spiritual costs and benefits (listed below) will differ between those who have—and those who have not—placed their faith in Jesus. For those who have placed their faith in Jesus, the initial perception of spiritual costs will transition into spiritual benefits because of the realized positive transitional changes that occurred within the heart and soul from each cost experience. Whereas, those who have not placed their faith in Jesus will perceive costs as costs (nonbeneficial).

It is also important to note that the enlightened realization of spiritual benefits is dependent upon the influence and workings of the Holy Spirit—and not by human will.

Spiritual Costs	Spiritual Benefits
• Persecution • Repentance • Denial of flesh • Relinquish ownership of assets to God • Sanctification • Temptations, trials and tribulations	• Forgiveness of sins • Experience God’s love and grace • Overcome Satan’s control • Break the bondage of sin • Move from spiritual darkness into spiritual light • Transformation from within • Emotional stability • Softened heart • Holy Spirit oversight and assistance • Eternity in Heaven

Spiritual Costs of Faith in Jesus

Persecution

One type of cost that may occur is persecution—which is comprised of various types and different levels of severity. For example, at the “mild” end of the persecution spectrum, family members and/or “friends” may act differently towards you, and relationships may change. Conversely, at the “strong” end of the persecution spectrum—depending upon the degree of religious freedom that is allowed within the country and culture one lives—the costs can be much higher: family/social banishment, imprisonment and even execution.



It is important to remember that those who persecute you are living in sin and darkness, and are unable to comprehend the love of God and the light of Jesus. These are those who are motivated by degrees of hatred that is able to delusionally justify their behavior with lies...especially those who murder someone for their beliefs.

“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.” John 3:19-20

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” John 15:18-20

However, Jesus assures us that the costs of earthly persecutions will be reimbursed with spiritual benefits while we are alive—and more important—once we are on the “other side.” “Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.” Mark 10:29-30 “Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven.” Matthew 5:11-12

Christian persecution is occurring now in various parts of the world. As the world continues to decline into the darkness of the last days, Christian persecution will increase and spread globally (Dan. 7:25; Mat. 24:9-14; Rev. 6:9-11, 20:4). Here are links to Christian persecution websites:

- Persecution.Org: (<https://persecution.org/>)
- OpenDoors: (<https://www.opendoors.org/>)

Repentance

Many view repentance (to stop sinning) as a cost—because sin is viewed as a benefit. However, when one turns towards Jesus, the Holy Spirit will change our mind (perception and attitude) towards sin. This transitional change of the mind occurs as we begin to understand (1) the significant costs of the sin, and (2) the sin has a controlling influence upon our behavior. As this realization of reality comes into focus, we begin to despise the sin because of the detrimental consequences that occurs to ourselves and others—including the negative emotions of remorse and shame when we fall prey to the lies, and the devastation it has upon family and friends. But what’s more, sin separates us from God—thereby adding to the additional weight and burden of sin’s consequences—which is why God (who loves us more than we are able to comprehend) gave His Son as a means to receive forgiveness for our sins.



“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:28-29

Denial of the Flesh

We were born with a sinful nature (aka our “flesh”)—which at times will lust after (desire, yearn for) sin. As such, denying the desires of our flesh may be viewed as a cost. However, fulfilling the desires of our flesh has associated spiritual costs—which can last for eternity if not forgiven. Each time we fail by succumbing to the lies, we feel deep remorse, guilt and shame because of our sin. However, this is a good thing—because negative feelings are a means of punishment (chastening) that is used by Holy Spirit to change our perception towards the sin. It is because the associated pain of our failures—combined with God’s love, grace, and forgiveness for what we had done—becomes a heart-felt motivation (a transitional change within our heart) to overcome the lies of the perceived benefits and influence of the sin—which facilitates the denial of our flesh.

“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives. If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.” Hebrews 12:5-11



These spiritual truths are verifiable by those who have overcome the desires of their flesh. The internal pain experienced after sinning—combined with God’s grace, forgiveness and love—becomes our motivational desire to crucify our fleshly desires and destroy our bondage to sin.

For those who think they need to “get their act together” before turning to Jesus...think again...for it is only God’s grace and love, forgiveness through belief in Jesus Christ, and the workings of the Holy Spirit can one can become transformed unto righteousness.

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Galatians 5:16-21, 24

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” Romans 8:1, 6-8

“Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Mat. 16:24; Luke 9:23

Relinquish Ownership of Assets to God

Some view the need to tithe a portion of their income to the church as a cost. Others reject the idea of relinquishing control over their personal assets to God (wealth, possessions, skills, accomplishments, and so forth—which are depicted by the various fruits in the basket). However, every delusional lie that justifies our self-centered behavior will become a regretful cost when we fail to obey the urgings of the Holy Spirit. Remember, no one can take any earthly “things” with them after they die. Plus, any perception of their earthly value becomes greatly depreciated when compared against the spiritual benefits that are obtained when these “things” are used for the glory of God, and for the sharing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—especially when you are able to experience the indescribable heart-felt emotions and tears of joy when they are used by the Holy Spirit to assist someone into the Kingdom of God.



As we spiritually realize all that Jesus did for us on the cross...we will find ourselves laying all that we are, all that we own, and all that we can do at the feet of Jesus...for His glory...because he alone is worthy!

Revelation 4:9-11 provides us with visual evidence of what it means to humbly surrender and acknowledge all that we are, all that we own, and all that we have accomplished are gifts from God—by the casting of their crowns (rewards in Heaven for faithfulness and service to God) before Him. “Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.’”

Paul reflected upon this spiritual truth of depreciated earthly value when he wrote to the Philippians. In Philippians 3:7, Paul explained that all earthly things (tangible and intangible) that he had gained in life (that were once a benefit to him)—had no value when compared to the spiritual benefits that could be gained in Jesus. “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” Philippians 3:7

Jesus reinforced our need to properly evaluate our priorities in life, and realistically consider those earthly things that may circumvent us from seeking, finding and knowing God. This is especially true for those who have sought and obtained wealth during their lives—which can become a stumbling block from experiencing spiritual treasures.

“If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Matthew 19:21, 23-24

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” Matthew 13:44

Here is another important point to understand: Whenever you give something to God...give it because of your heart-felt desire, with joy in that it is given for His glory—because of your love for Him—and not because you are complying with a mandated requirement.

- “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:7
- “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” Matthew 6:19-20

Sanctification

Jesus was a mirror image of God. As such, sanctification may be simply defined as a process of making us into a mirror image of Jesus...as we become more like Him and less like ourselves. And at times sanctification may be viewed as a cost because it can be somewhat painful (my personal experience) as we face the truths about the many flaws of our self-centered and sinful nature.



Those who are being sanctified will often pray, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalms 139:23-24

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Thessalonians 5:23

“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they

also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.” John 17:18-29

Temptations, Trials and Tribulations

Temptations, trials and tribulations are a part of the sanctification process. Temptations are an opportunity to sin. Trials are a test of our faith, patience and stamina as we experience negative situations in life. Tribulations are much worse than temptations and trials because they comprise severe hardship, adversity, and distress.

- A wise person once said, “A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials.”
- “But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; and all we are the work of Your hand.” Isaiah 64:8



Temptations: Jesus said, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Matthew 26:41

Trials: “In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 1:6-7

Tribulations: “We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.” Romans 5:3-4

Spiritual Benefits of Faith in Jesus

Those who accept the greatest gift God has ever offered to mankind have the opportunity to experience a multitude of benefits that are unattainable by any other means.

Please note that the following list of 10 benefits is not all-inclusive because there are additional specific benefits one may derive from their faith in Jesus. For example, when we are wronged by someone it can be very difficult to forgive them. However, in Christ, it becomes easier to forgive others because (1) we are forgiven, and (2) because it is easier to spiritually see the influence of Satan's lies upon those who are in darkness. The best example of this spiritual truth was demonstrated by Jesus when He prayed to the Father to forgive those who took part in His execution before He died on the cross, **"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."** Luke 23:34

- **"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends."** John 15:13
- **"Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever."** Galatians 1:4-5

1. Forgiveness of sins
2. Experience God's love and grace
3. Overcome Satan's control
4. Break the bondage of sin
5. Move from spiritual darkness into spiritual light
6. Transformation from within
7. Emotional stability
8. Softened heart
9. Holy Spirit oversight and assistance
10. Eternity in Heaven

Remember...each decision involves a benefit and a cost. As such, each benefit of faith in Jesus is also a cost for those who reject Jesus. For example, with regards to the benefit of the forgiveness of our sins, those who reject Jesus are not forgiven for their sins. Therefore, as you read about each benefit of faith in Jesus, consider the costs of each benefit for those who reject Jesus.

When you think about it...the decision to accept Jesus or reject Him...is the most important decision anyone can make in their life because each decision has either costs or benefits that will last for eternity!

Forgiveness of Sins

All humans have a sinful nature—which drives our propensity to sin and rebel against God—and which facilitates spiritual death and separation from God.

- **"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** Romans 3:23
- **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."** 1 John 1:8

The evidence of our sinful nature (the works of our flesh) is continually demonstrated by others and ourselves. **"Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."** Galatians 5:19-22

However, it is possible for a person to be pardoned for their sins. The word "pardon" is commonly defined as having two attributes:

1. Being forgiven for an offense.
2. Elimination of any consequences (i.e. punishment) for the offense.

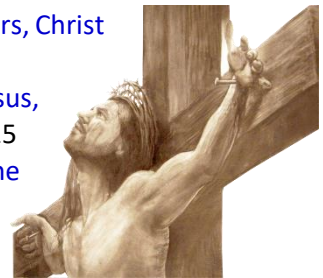
From an earthly perspective, a pardon is often a government decision—given by someone who has the legal authority—to someone who may have committed a crime, or has been convicted of a crime. This act legally absolves the person from receiving any warranted penalties that are associated with their illegal behavior.

From a spiritual perspective, because Jesus Christ willingly gave His life and shed His blood on the cross—as a sacrifice for our crimes (sins)—He has the legal authority to pardon (forgive) us for our sins.

- “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” Matthew 28:18
- “The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.” Mark 2:10

We are able to obtain forgiveness—by faith in Jesus—in that He received the consequences (punishment) of our sins into His body as a propitiation for our transgressions. For example, imagine you have been convicted of a crime, you are standing before the judge, and you are waiting to hear what your punishment will be. However, before the judge executes his judgment, Jesus walks into the courtroom and declares He will receive whatever punishment is due for your actions. For this scenario spiritually exemplifies what Jesus did for us on the cross—because He became the recipient of God’s righteous wrath—which we deserve—because of our sin.

- “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8
- “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith.” Rom. 3:23-25
- “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21
- “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” 1 Peter 2:24



“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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

God has offered all of humanity a free gift of forgiveness and eternal life in Heaven to those who believe in His Son.

- “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Romans 10:13
- “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

God’s free gift of salvation is obtained by following 2 requirements:

1. We must **place our faith in Jesus** in that He died for our sins. For whoever believes in Him:
 - “Will receive remission of sins.” Acts 10:43
 - “Should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16
 - “Is not condemned.” John 3:18
2. We must **confess our sins to God** (pleading our guilt with a remorseful and repentant heart).
 - “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9
 - “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” Psalms 32:5

Here is an example of a prayer of salvation to God. *Holy God, thank you for sending your Son to die as a sacrifice and propitiation for my sins, so that I may be forgiven. Lord, I have sinned against you, and I am deeply sorry. I ask you Jesus to come into my heart as my Savior and Lord, and change me from within. Holy Spirit, teach me, guide me, and make me into the person you want me to be for the glory of God. In the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.*

Rejection of Jesus is a forgivable sin when one makes a decision to believe in Him. However, if someone continues to reject God's free gift in Jesus, they will also continue to experience the consequential costs of their decision. But what's worse, if they reject Jesus until their death...their eternal fate is sealed, there is no hope of salvation, and they will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

- "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6
- "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day." John 12:48
- "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." John 8:24

Experience God's love and grace

There are no words to describe nor images that can depict God's love—because we lack the capacity to fully comprehend love from His perspective. The only human experience that may provide a glimpse into God's love for us is by reflecting upon the love we have towards our children. Parental love is comprised of an unconditional affectionate bond with our children. As they grow from infancy through their teenage years, we seek to assist and guide them through emotional, psychological and social development—all with the intent of preparing and equipping them to functionally succeed in life as an adult. When they make mistakes, we seek to change their behavior by implementing various forms of punishment—all because of our love for them, and because of the long-term consequences if the inappropriate behaviors continue. As they get older and begin a life on their own...our loving bond never diminishes...for the desire to assist and provide for their needs remains.

However, unforgiven sin within the parent can severely constrict and destroy their ability to experience and express a loving bond with their children. In other words, sin destroys our ability to love. But unlike man, God is holy, righteous, and there are no means that can restrict His love towards us...except for our sin...which He will not tolerate. For this is why God gave His Son, Jesus, who paid the price for our sins by becoming a recipient of His wrath (for our sins) as Jesus died on the cross.

The Book of Isaiah was written hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus—which prophesized the coming Messiah who would bear our sins. "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:5 Click this link ([Isaiah 53](#)) to obtain the benefits of reading the full chapter.

In the same way that our love as a parent motivates us to prepare and equip our children to succeed in life, God's love has provided a way to prepare and equip us to spend eternity with Him.

- "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" Matthew 7:11
- "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8
- "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11
- "Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." Ephesians 3:17-19
- "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" Psalms 34:8
- "For in Him [Jesus] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." Colossians 2:9-10
- "We love Him because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19

Overcome Satan's Control

Satan effectively uses delusional lies—targeted at our sinful flesh—to facilitate his control as he implements darkness, deception, destruction, and death (spiritual and physical). But what's more, those who are living in darkness are unable to see the spiritual reality of Satan's influence upon the earth, and upon themselves.

"Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." 2 Corinthians 4:4

"And that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will." 2 Timothy 2:26

"They themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage." 2 Peter 2:19

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning." 1 John 3:8

"Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey." Romans 6:16

"But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me." Romans 7:17-20

"Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." John 8:34

However, those who have decided to place their faith in Jesus are able to "tap into" spiritual strength and power to overcome Satan and his minions.

- "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:7-8
- "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Ephesians 6:11, 16
- "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John 5:4-5

Break the Bondage of Sin



While there are many self-help books, psychological theories, and human contrived remedies, there is only one way to spiritually break slavery and bondage to sin: faith in Jesus Christ.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:31-32

"Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." Romans 8:2

Move From Spiritual Darkness Into Spiritual Light

Imagine you are in a completely dark room. There is no light, not even a flicker from a small candle. Your ability to see what's around you is impossible. As such, you must walk about carefully, reaching out with your hands in an attempt to figure out what surrounds you. As you move about, you encounter things that make you stumble, fall and cause harm to yourself. For this scenario describes one who is living in spiritual darkness.

"The way of the wicked is like darkness; they do not know what makes them stumble." Proverbs 4:19

"And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you." Deuteronomy 28:29

"Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." Ephesians 4:18

When one decides to put their faith in Jesus Christ (who illuminates our ability to see in spiritual darkness) they will begin to see things differently. This spiritual awareness and sight includes family, friends, what's portrayed in the media, what's going on in the world, and an ability to see themselves from a different perspective. In addition, Bible scriptures begin to speak to the heart, priorities in life change, and we feel different on the inside...all due to "a light in the dark room" has been illuminated so that we can see—because of our faith in Jesus.



Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12

- "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth." 1 John 1:5-6
- "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." John 1:4-5
- "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord." Ephesians 5:8

Transformation From Within

No matter how hard we try, we are unable to change who we are from the inside. We may change how we look and we may attempt to change how we behave—but we are unable to spiritually change our heart and soul. For God designed us in a way that inner change will only occur by faith in His Son, and by the influential workings of the Holy Spirit.

"Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil." Jeremiah 13:23

Here is an insightful and thought provoking question to consider. If we were designed with an ability to change ourselves from within—and were able to attain a degree of righteousness that is acceptable to God—would the life and death of Jesus been in vain?

"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." John 14:16-17

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans 12:2



“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Emotional Stability

There are a multitude of “things” we encounter on a daily basis that instigate and magnifies stress and anxiety. These traumatic “things” may be categorized as financial stressors, employment concerns, family conflicts, health issues, and so forth. Sometimes these caustic experiences can become debilitating as they consume our thoughts, and cause us to feel like we are riding on an emotional rollercoaster that we can’t get off.



Faith in Jesus will not remove the influence of all “things” from occurring. However, faith in Jesus will help to reduce the overwhelming intensity of these challenges while providing greater emotional stability in your day-to-day life—because faith means to trust in God in that He has things under His control. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:29

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Matthew 6:25-34

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” John 15:11

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.” John 14:1

- “The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7
- “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Romans 8:6
- “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7
- “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

Softened Heart

Sin hardens our heart. In addition, the hardened condition of our heart will become even stronger when we encounter the will of God via the Holy Spirit—and we decide to fight His will by holding onto our pride and our arrogance—as we foolishly justify our decision to reject Him based upon a self-centered deceptional lie. The only means to maintain our position—and a disagreement with God—is to increase the hardness of our heart. There is no other option for the stubborn and unwilling heart of one who decides to not listen and obey the Holy Spirit.

“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” Romans 2:5

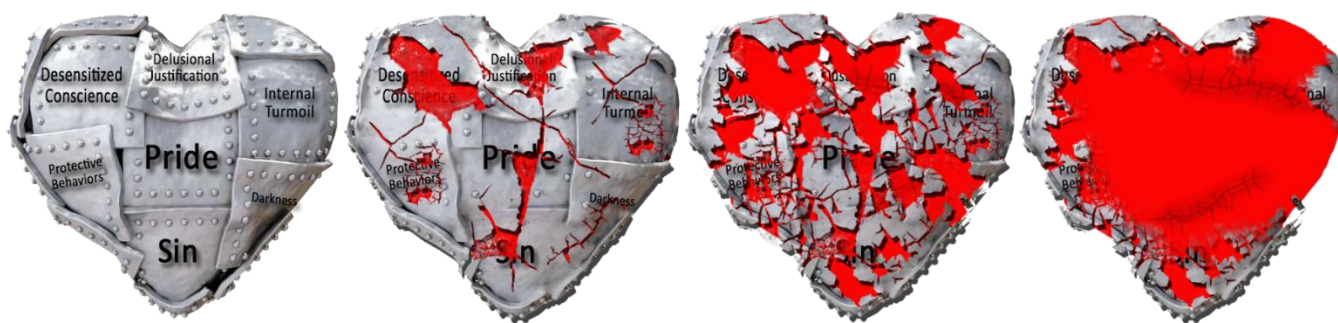
“They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.” Ephesians 4:18

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.” Proverbs 28:13-14

“Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God...hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Hebrews 3:13

“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.” John 12:40

Softening and “healing” of our hardened heart begins when we’ve reached the point where we have had enough, and when the costs of our sin exceeds any perceived benefits. This is when we ask God for forgiveness; this is when a crack occurs in our heart’s armor that allows a “sliver of light” via the Holy Spirit to enter and illuminate His Truth; this is when our hardened heart begins to weaken from the internal pressure of regret and sorrow; this is when God’s grace acts as a solvent to dissolve the hardened layers, and soften the scars; and this is when we experience the miraculous influence and power of God’s grace upon our heart’s broken and contrite transformation.



“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezekiel 36:26

“Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” Hebrews 3:15

Holy Spirit Oversight and Assistance

Here is a very simple truth...we need help in navigating this thing called life! We need oversight and assistance by someone who has a greater understanding of what's going on...and by someone who understands the "bigger picture." This truth speaks to two sides of the spectrum of perceived self-sufficiency:

- I'm capable: These are those who perceive they have sufficient life skills and the intellectual capabilities to succeed in life, and will pridefully depend upon themselves and not God.
- I'm incapable: These are those who at times feel as if they are careening down the road of life, out of control, no idea of where they are going, fearful about what's going on...but hang on because they have no other choice.

So, here is another insightful and thought provoking question. Which of the two sides of the spectrum of perceived self-sufficiency is more likely to yield themselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?

Jesus declared, **"For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."** Luke 14:11

As the Holy Spirit transitions us from within, we begin to discover our various faults and frailties that lead to failures. Each time we are humbled by our mistakes we willingly yield more of ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.



"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." John 14:26

"When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." John 16:13

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

"But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you." 1 Peter 5:10

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." Ephesians 1:13-14

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Jude 1:24

Eternity in Heaven

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also." John 14:2-3



"For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Corinthians 5:1

"Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Matthew 5:12

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:3-5

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord." 1 Thes. 4:16-17

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4:17-18

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know." John 14:1-4

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'" Revelation 7:9-10

Avoidance of Eternity in the Lake of Fire

Those who believe in Jesus will experience the benefit of avoiding eternity in the lake of fire. However, those who reject Jesus will experience the greatest cost of any decision they have ever made: eternity in the lake of fire. As such, given the unimaginable everlasting consequences, there is no earthly justification to reject Jesus Christ.



"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the

Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." Rev. 20:10-15

“He himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.” Revelation 14:10-11

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.” Revelation 19:19-20

“But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Revelation 21:8

“When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction.” 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Matthew 25:41



Additional Information

Listed below are lessons on UniqueBibleStudy.com that correlate to each cost and benefit.

Costs	Lesson Titles
Persecution	“21 Signs of the Last Days”
Repentance	“What is a Born-Again Christian”
Denial of flesh	“3 Types of Death 1 Source of Life” and “6 Stages of Temptation”
Relinquish ownership of assets to God	“Tithe”
Sanctification	“Sanctification”
Temptations, trials and tribulations	“Temptations, Trials and Tribulations”
Benefits	
Forgiveness of sins	“What is a Born-Again Christian” and “The Power of Forgiveness”
Experience God’s love and grace	“Loving God” and “The Mystery of God’s Heart”
Overcome Satan’s control	“Body, Soul, Heart and Spirit”
Break the bondage of sin	“6 Stages of Temptation”
Move from spiritual darkness into spiritual light	“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” and “Let Your Light Shine”
Transformation from within	“Sanctification”
Emotional stability	“Emotions”
Softened heart	“God’s Grace and the Hardened Heart”
Holy Spirit oversight and assistance	“Signs the Holy Spirit is Transforming Us From Within”
Eternity in Heaven	“Revelation’s Blessings”

I pray the content of this lesson:

1. Has provided you with a greater spiritual awareness and understanding of:
 - The costs and benefits of faith in Jesus.
 - The uniformed/misinformed perceptions of costs vs. benefits by those who do not know Jesus.
2. Enhances your ability to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ when you encounter:
 - Objections based upon misunderstandings.
 - Someone who has not considered the benefits of faith in Jesus.
3. Reinforces your resolve to become more like Him and less like yourself—a spiritual transition that has multiple benefits and rewards—which we will lay at the feet of our Savior and Lord because He alone is worthy of recognition and praise!

All for His Glory!
Harold D. Thomas