



HOAW Newsletter

For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things?
2 Corinthians 2:15-16

December 2023

HELPING MEN LIVE LIVES OF INTEGRITY AND HONOR

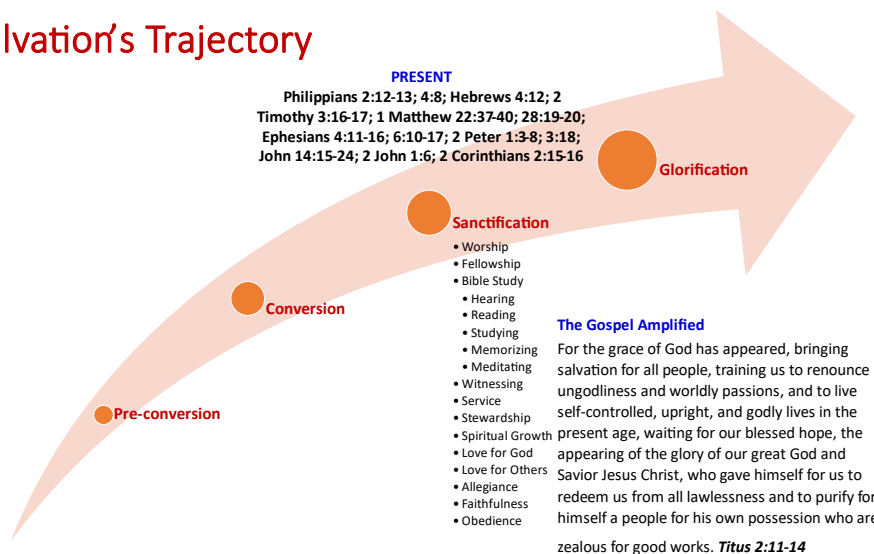
Salvation's Trajectory - Part 3

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Salvation's Trajectory

Once an unbeliever receives Jesus as Savior and Lord by a repentant confession expressing the need of a Savior, several things happen

Now that the believer is saved, they are on the road to spiritual maturity through commitment to godly practices, spiritual disciplines and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit in their life. Salvation's Trajectory now proceeds to this third phase.



In the HOAW November 2023 Newsletter I explored the act of conversion precipitated by an acknowledgment that a Savior is needed to rescue an unbeliever for the penalty and punishment of unconfessed and uncovered sin.

instantaneously including justification, redemption, reconciliation, indwelling, regeneration, adoption, kingdom citizenship, and the fruit of the Spirit in seed form.

Several scriptures underscore the importance of growing spiritually. We are to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18). What God began in us He will see to completion (Philippians 1:6). We are encouraged to bear fruit and increase in knowledge (Colossians 1:9-10). And that certain qualities are worth pursuing so that we will be effective and fruitful (2 Peter 1:5-8). We are to work out our salvation. In **Philippians 2:12-13** we read, "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and**

trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." What does it mean to "work out your salvation?"

The Greek verb rendered "work out" means "to continually work to bring something to completion or fruition." We do this by actively pursuing obedience in the process of sanctification. Paul, the apostle, describes himself as "straining" and "pressing on" toward the goal of Christlikeness (Philippians 3:13-14). The "trembling" he experiences is the attitude Christians are to have in pursuing this goal—a healthy fear of offending God through disobedience and an awe and respect for His majesty and holiness. In summary, working out your salvation is not about losing it if we are disobedient, it is about fulfilling our responsibility to grow in the Lord aided by empowerment from the Holy Spirit. We have been given everything we need for the pursuit of godliness (2 Peter 1:3-8).

Titus 2:11-14 describes the benefits that accrue to us and the obligations we have because of God's grace. *"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people (benefit), training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions (obligation), and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age (obligation), waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (benefit), who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession (benefit) who are zealous for good works (obligation).*" We are to grow up in every way to Christlikeness (Ephesians 4:13, 15).

Sanctification literally means to set apart. Sanctification is God's will for us (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Biblical scholars explain sanctification as "holiness or a separation. In the past, God granted us justification, a once-for-all, positional holiness in Christ. Now, God guides us to maturity, a practical, progressive holiness. In the future, God will give us glorification, a permanent, ultimate holiness. These three phases of sanctification separate the believer from the penalty of sin (justification), the power of sin (maturity), and the presence of sin (glorification). How is 'progressive holiness' accomplished?"

To be sure, the Holy Spirit is indispensable for bringing about this gradual transformation. The change is incremental. In **2 Corinthians 3:18** we read, *"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."* The instruments God used to facilitate this transformation over time includes **worship** (Romans 12:1-2), **fellowship** (Acts 2:42; 1 John 1:3, 7), **Bible study** (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Joshua 1:8; 2 Timothy 2:15), **witnessing** (1 Peter 3:15; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20), **service** (1 Peter 4:10-11; Galatians 5:13-14; Hebrews 13:16), **stewardship** of time, talents, and treasure (1 Peter 4:10; 2 Corinthians 6:17-19); 1 Timothy 6:17-19), and expressed **love for God and others** (Matthew 22:37-40).

God shapes us into the image of His Son through Bible study. The

Bible, often referred to as the 'sword' is the only offensive weapon we have against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Most Christians seem satisfied with **hearing** the word (Romans 10:17). If that is your primary diet alone, retention of the word is only 5% at best. Adding **reading** the word (Revelation 1:3) results in retention of 15%. Hearing and reading the word may give us a basic knowledge of the word, the capability to comprehend its significance, and to fundamentally apply what we have learned. However, it is the **study** (Acts 17:11), **memorization** (Psalm 119:9-11), and **meditation** (Psalm 1:2-3) that provides deeper learning, retention and transformation. Study, memorization, and meditation helps us have a firm grip on the word through analysis, synthesis (with other scripture), and evaluation (the ability to make wise decisions, good judgments, and mature discernment).

Most importantly, is our need to **obey** the word (John 14:15-24; 1 John 5:3; Romans 6:16). Obedience produces strength; disobedience produces weakness. We show our love for God by being obedient to Him. Emotions have little to do with it. The kind of love that pleases God is action-oriented and others-mindedness as described so clearly in **1 Corinthians 12:4-8**. In this passage we are told what love is, what love is not, and what love is regardless, *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things,*

believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away."

If we are to grow spiritually, we must decide who will sit on the throne of our lives. Will it be tradition, heritage, experience, alternative worldviews instead of a biblical worldview, or some philosophy or ideology. Or will we make a decision to put Jesus Christ and the Bible on the throne of our lives. The latter choice brings life. The former choice brings death. To whom will your allegiance fall? Whose flag will secure your loyalty? To whom will you be faithful? My hope is that your allegiance, loyalty, and faithfulness will be to the Lord?

J. I. Packer, a theologian now with the Lord, makes the following Biblical observations, some of which I referred to in a previous newsletter.

"When God made man, he communicated to him qualities corresponding to His moral attributes. This is what the Bible means when it tells us that God made man (meaning both men and women) in His own image – namely, that God made man (and woman) a free spiritual being, a responsible moral agent with powers of choice and action, able to commune with Him and respond to Him, and by nature good, truthful, holy, upright (Eccl 7:29): in a word, godly."

"The moral qualities which belonged to the divine image were lost at the Fall; God's image in man has been universally defaced, for all mankind

has in one way or another lapsed into ungodliness. But the Bible tells us that now, in fulfillment of His plan of redemption, God is at work in Christian believers to repair His ruined image by communicating these qualities to them afresh. This is what Scripture means when it says that Christians are being renewed in the image of Christ and of God."

We are designed to live in accordance with God's design. If we don't there are consequences. What would eventually happen if you filled your automobile tank with sugar water? Your engine would ultimately seize up and not run. What would eventually happen if you filled your automobile tank with diesel fuel? It would run for a while but would ultimately quite running. The plugs would be gummed up and refuse to fire.

I was mentoring several men from a church in which I was an associate pastor. We spent a week in Montana fishing for trout. I decided to wash the dishes after a meal one evening. In a cabin was a dishwasher. I couldn't find any soap except a box of Tide. I figure soap was soap and poured some of it in the receptacle in the washer. I set the wash cycle and went outside for a while. To my utter surprise I came in to find soap suds knee deep throughout the kitchen and slowly making its way into the other rooms in the cabin. I learned the hard way that the dishwasher was not made for laundry detergent.

J. I. Packer is again instructive about God's design.

"We are familiar with the thought that our bodies are like machines, needing the right routine of food, rest, and exercise if they are to run efficiently, and liable, if filled up with the wrong fuel—alcohol, drugs, poison—to lose their power of healthy functioning and ultimately to 'seize up' entirely in physical death. What we are perhaps slower to grasp is that God wishes us to think of our souls in a similar way."

"As rational persons, we were made to bear God's moral image—that is, our souls were made to 'run' on the practice of worship, law-keeping, truthfulness, honesty, discipline, self-control, and service to God and others. If we abandon these practices, not only do we incur guilt before God; we also progressively destroy our souls. Conscience atrophies, the sense of shame dries up, one's capacity for truthfulness, loyalty, and honesty is eaten away, one's character disintegrates. One not only becomes desperately miserable; one is steadily being de-humanized."

When we violate God's designed purposes, we can expect less than favorable results.

The next HOAW Newsletter will explore the fourth and final phase of Salvation's Trajectory called Glorification. I will seek to answer the question. What will happen when God calls us home?

OTHER NEWS



Heart of a Warrior Ministries offers four journeys you can take to become who

God created you to be.

The Foundation (Ground Zero) helps establish strong biblical foundations for the battles ahead.

The Compass (Phase I) calibrates a warrior's heart and tunes that heart to the heart of God. I am currently leading 45 at Calvary Church WBL Campus on this journey.

The Map (Phase II) helps men focus on what matters in accordance with their unique divine wiring.

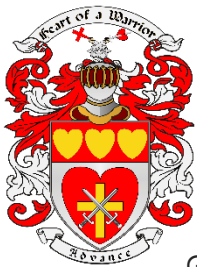
The Guide (Phase III) develops the spiritual discipline of being mentored and mentoring others.

Go to our website for more details.

www.heartofawarrior.org/journeys/

Previous newsletters dating back to January 2018 may be found at www.heartofawarrior.org/newpage-1

If you would like to contact me directly, email me at Greg@HeartofaWarrior.org



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