



The Salvation of the Soul

Moving Beyond Spiritual Birth Toward Complete Maturity in Christ

There is a truth that many believers never fully grasp: being born again is not the finish line — it is the starting line. The moment you accept Jesus Christ as Lord and King, your spirit is made new. But the journey toward wholeness does not end there. In fact, it has only just begun.

Think of it this way: accepting Jesus is like purchasing a house and moving in. The house now belongs to you. But moving in does not mean the house is clean. The rooms need to be put in order, and old clutter must be cleared out. That ongoing work of inner transformation is what Scripture calls the salvation of the soul.

What Is the Soul — and Why Does It Need Saving?

When we are born again, our spirit is instantly renewed and made alive in God. But the soul — composed of the mind, the emotions, and the will — does not automatically transform at the moment of conversion. It must be renewed over time. If the soul remains unsaved and untransformed, a believer will find themselves perpetually unstable: driven by emotions, controlled by impulses, and an easy target for the enemy.

Illustration: Imagine standing in the ocean as waves crash around you. Every minute, a new wave knocks you off your feet. A person whose soul is not yet saved lives exactly this way — constantly knocked down by their own emotions, unable to make stable decisions, because their inner life has no firm foundation.

Illustration: Consider a thief casing a neighborhood. If he sees security cameras on a house, he immediately moves on. But if the house appears unprotected, he returns again and again. The enemy works the same way. An unsaved soul — unguarded and



unrenewed — becomes an open door. The enemy recognizes spiritual vulnerability and exploits it without hesitation.

The Sign of an Unsaved Soul in a Born-Again Believer

One of the clearest signs of an unsaved soul in a genuine believer is a life governed entirely by emotions. Such a person loves God sincerely, but their walk with Him rises and falls with their feelings. They are spiritually moody — on fire one week, gone the next.

The Apostle Peter is one of Scripture's most powerful examples of this struggle. He declared boldly that even if everyone else denied Christ, he never would. His love for Jesus was real. But when the pressure came, he was among the first to deny and even curse his Lord. His spirit was willing, but his soul — his emotions, his will, his self-control — had not yet been saved. A born-again believer with an unsaved soul will make bold declarations in moments of spiritual warmth, and collapse in moments of real pressure.

God's Goal for the Believer: Becoming Christ-Like

If the salvation of the soul is a process, what is its destination? God's ultimate goal for every believer is to possess the very character of Christ. When people interact with you, they should experience a sense of comfort, stability, and grace — not someone who reacts to every situation with anxiety or anger, but a person whose inner life reflects the Lord Himself.

This process of formation is not new — even Christ Himself went through it:

Hebrews 5:8 (NIV)

Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Jesus spent thirty years in preparation before His public ministry began. In the culture of the ancient world, a king would train his son thoroughly in every aspect of leadership. After that formation was complete, the king would hold a public ceremony and declare: "This is my beloved son — listen to him." This was not merely an announcement of identity; it was a declaration that the son was fully prepared and ready to represent the father's kingdom.



This is precisely what God the Father declared over Christ at His baptism — and it came at the end of a long process of formation, not at the beginning.

God desires to make the same declaration over His children. But it follows a process. The trials, the discipline, the suffering — these are not punishments. They are the means by which souls are formed and saved. Peter makes this clear:

1 Peter 1:3–9 (NIV)

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith — of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Peter is writing to born-again believers — people already saved in spirit. Yet he speaks of something they are still receiving: "the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." This is not eternal salvation after death. It is the complete maturity of the soul, attained here on earth, in this lifetime. It is the highest point a believer can reach through faith — a renewed mind, a governed will, and emotions submitted to the Spirit of God.

An unsaved mind, by contrast, is like a person who attends the funeral of someone they barely knew, and yet breaks down weeping uncontrollably — or becomes consumed with terror about their own death. There is no inner anchor. The soul is at the mercy of every emotion that passes through it.

Three Goals of the Salvation of the Soul

As the soul is progressively renewed through the Word and the Spirit, three distinguishing qualities emerge in the life of the believer. These are not optional virtues — they are the evidence and the goal of inner transformation.



1. Humility

A believer with a saved soul becomes easy to be with — approachable, teachable, and gentle. This matters in every area of life: in marriage, in relationships, in ministry, and in the believer's walk with God.

Pride is the primary enemy of soul salvation. A proud believer insists on solving problems their own way rather than God's way. When faced with a challenge, they lean on their own reasoning and resist the correction of the Spirit. Stubbornness — pride's companion — is not a harmless personality quirk. It is the posture of a soul that refuses to submit. And a soul that refuses to yield to God has placed itself on the throne that belongs to Christ alone.

2. Mastery of the Tongue

The second mark of a soul in salvation is the ability to govern the tongue — especially in moments of anger, conflict, and emotional pressure. This is one of the most difficult and most important battles a believer will ever face.

Proverbs 16:32 (NIV)

Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

A person who knows their identity — a child of God, loved and secure — does not need to retaliate. They can be silent when silence is wisdom. They can speak with grace when words are needed. They can pray for those who wound them, because a person with a saved soul knows how to pray for their enemies. Forgiveness, in this light, is not a feeling. It is a decision of the will — a reflection of the character of the Lord in us.

Parents and leaders who are quick to anger are often people repressing deep inner wounds. Because those wounds have not been brought to God for healing, the pain leaks out — and it always seems to find the people they love most. The salvation of the soul heals those wounds at the root, so that what flows out of us is grace, not poison.

3. Endurance (Long-Suffering)



The third mark is endurance — the ability to persist in what God has called you to without turning back. This quality separates those who begin with great enthusiasm from those who actually finish.

Lack of endurance looks like this: a pastor gives you a spiritual book, and you begin reading with great excitement. You reach page twenty — and weeks later, you are still there. If that pattern defines your spiritual life, you will not advance. You will remain in the same place, year after year, while God is calling you forward.

One of the spiritual anointings in Scripture is the anointing of the ox. An ox moves forward — steadily, consistently, under any weight. It does not rush ahead in excitement, nor does it retreat when the load is heavy. It keeps moving forward. This is the spirit of endurance that God calls every believer to walk in.

Psalm 44:5 (NIV)

Through you we push back our enemies; through your name we trample our foes.

Joshua and Caleb embody this spirit. They saw the same giants, the same obstacles, and the same impossible odds as the other ten spies. But they did not go backward. Decades later, after forty years of wilderness that were not their fault, they were still standing — still moving forward. The Holy Spirit within us is the source of this endurance. He makes us stronger than anything life throws at us, just as He did for Joshua and Caleb.

How Is the Soul Saved? God's Provision Through Godly Leadership

If the salvation of the soul is so essential, how does it actually come about? Paul answers this directly:

Ephesians 4:8, 11–12 (NIV)

*"When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people."
... So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.*



When Christ ascended, He did not withdraw from His Church. He gave gifts to it. Chief among those gifts, for the salvation of the soul, are pastors and teachers. The phrase "he took captives" speaks of Christ imparting His own nature — elevating believers beyond their natural limitations and forming them into His likeness through His appointed servants.

Paul then lays out three sequential levels that cannot be reordered or skipped:

1. Spiritual maturity — the equipping of the saints
2. Works of service — ministry that flows from maturity
3. Building up the whole body of Christ

You cannot move to the next level without completing the one before it. There are no shortcuts in God's process. You cannot do effective, lasting works of service from an immature soul. And you cannot build up the body of Christ until you are yourself serving. Consistent discipleship under faithful pastoral leadership is not optional — it is God's specific provision for the salvation of your soul.

A Warning: The Cost of an Unsaved Soul

Scripture gives us a sobering portrait of what happens when a person with great calling and great authority refuses the process of soul salvation. His name is Saul — the first king of Israel.

1 Samuel 15:3, 20–23 (NIV)

"Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them..." ... "But I did obey the Lord," Saul said. "I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal." But Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king."

The tragedy of Saul is not that he was wicked — it is that he was partially obedient. He did most of what God commanded, and then justified the rest. More revealingly, when



confronted by Samuel, he genuinely believed he had obeyed. His unsaved soul had deceived him into thinking that his own version of obedience was sufficient — that his reasoning could substitute for God's clear instruction.

Samuel's response goes to the very heart of what soul salvation is about: obedience is better than sacrifice. A soul that refuses to submit cannot compensate with religious activity. Stubbornness, Samuel declares, is rebellion. Self-will is idolatry. These are not minor character flaws — they are spiritual postures that cost Saul his entire kingdom.

Saul's downfall was not dramatic sin. It was a will that refused to bow. And that is exactly what the salvation of the soul is designed to heal.

***Do not be satisfied with a saved spirit alone.
Press on — until you receive the end result of your faith: the salvation
of your soul.***