

Let us begin with Step 3, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 3 – Faith – Through God’s mercy and grace, we recognized our lost condition, repented of our sin, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior to receive the gift of eternal life. Moment by moment we reaffirm that decision by turning our will and lives over to the care of God.

Tonight, we will begin talking about faith, a gift from God that makes both our initial salvation and our subsequent daily walk with Christ possible.

Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

This verse leads a person to considerations of God’s stature and our own great needs before Him. Genuine faith does not simply believe that a divine being exists, but that the God of Scripture is the only real and true God who exists. In Step 1 we discussed confession because we genuinely recognized our problem as sin. In Step 2 we recognized God’s plan in dealing with our sin problem. Now in Step 3 we move from taking in information to responding to it.

Let us stop for a minute and think through some things...

- If sin is our problem, and God has the only solution, doesn’t it make sense to trust Him?
- But trust is difficult. Often when you trust someone, they fail to meet your expectations. Does the gospel seem too good to be true? Are you skeptical of how it works?
- Real trust can only go as far as the trustworthiness of the one you are trusting. Do you believe an all-powerful, all-knowing, and loving God is trustworthy?
- When you boil it down, who is more trustworthy, God or yourself? When you trust yourself to take care of your sin, what happens? When you trust God to take care of your sin what happens?

As one young woman in *12 Steps with God* recently said, I tried it my way and it didn’t go so well.

There is an account in the Bible of a man who recognized his need to be saved and yet he did not know how to get there. Somehow (the Bible does not give these details) he knew he needed God’s forgiveness and rescue. Through the testimony of a very committed Christian, this man knew he had found someone who could help him be saved, so he candidly asked, “What do I need to do to be saved?”

Acts 16:31

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

Salvation is just that simple, and yet that difficult. To trust in Jesus Christ is to fully acknowledge that He is who He said He is – He is the Christ, the Son of God and His death was a literal substitution for yours, and that life is offered as a free gift from God. It is not difficult to understand but can be difficult to accept, yet salvation only comes when you accept in complete faith, just as the man in the book of Acts.

Romans 10:13, “For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved

Paul quoted the OT Prophet Joel (2:32) to emphasize that salvation is available for people of all nations and races. To call upon God is to believe that He hears, He can help, and that He will indeed come to your rescue. The one who *calls upon His name* has already concluded that they have a need, and that He is the only one that can meet it.

Romans 10:9-10, “If you will confess the Lord Jesus with your mouth and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. For with the heart man believes for righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made for salvation.”

The word confess is not a simple acknowledgement that He is God and the Lord of the universe, since even demons acknowledge that – this is a deep personal conviction, without reservation, that Jesus is that person’s own master or sovereign...the One who makes lasting victory/recovery possible.

The context of these verses gives an innate order of faith and public confession. One only makes a public proclamation if he is convinced of the truth of his message within his own heart, and a man’s heart is moved by faith. But also true is the fact that sometimes we can be swayed by our audience to say what we believe they want to hear, though our hearts are not in it. Many a man has offered a statement of salvation, yet never trusted in his heart. That is why the verses call on both the heart and the mouth. We trust within...*in our heart*, and witness without....we acknowledge to the world that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior.

Consider and confess:

1. In honesty, do you believe there is a God? Why, or why not?
2. If you do believe there is a God, do you believe He is capable of rescuing you from sin’s penalty? Why, or why not?
3. If you do believe He is capable, are you trusting Him to remove your sin and its consequences?
4. If you are really trusting God to take care of your sin, how do you live as a result of that trust in God? Do you take advantage of His grace? Do you strive to please Him in humbleness? Do you maintain an accurate view of His mercy and grace, or do you take your salvation for granted?
5. If you have trusted in Christ, have you shared that with others? Why, or why not?
6. Proverbs 23:7 says, “... as a man thinks, so is he...”. Based on your lifestyle, is there evidence of trust in God?

Looking forward:

After walking through Step 1 – Confession and Step 2 – Gospel, we have arrived at Step 3 - Faith – the pinnacle of the first three steps. In this capstone Step, we reflect on the fact that faith is a gift from God and trust in Him is what makes our salvation possible.

In this next part of Step 3 we will explore the moment by moment...turning our wills and lives over to the care of God – this is where the rubber meets the road. This is when we put our faith into action and begin walking closer and closer to Christ each day.