

The New Birth

Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, were created to live in unbroken fellowship with their maker, God. Adam's body was created out of the dust of the earth and God breathed life into him. (Genesis 2:7) God saw it was not good for man to be alone. (Genesis 2:18) He caused a deep sleep to come on Adam and took one of his ribs and fashioned woman. (Genesis 2:21,22)

The man walked and talked with God in the beautiful paradise of the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were created to live forever in close fellowship with their maker. This fellowship was broken when Eve listened to Satan, in the form of a serpent, who subtly injected doubts about the heart of her Father, God. God had told them they could eat freely of any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He warned them that in the day they ate of it they would surely die. Satan told Eve she would not die, but her eyes would be opened and she would be like God. Genesis 3:4,5 (NIV). Eve was snared and listened to Satan. Adam in turn listened to the woman Eve. When they chose to follow Satan's sly suggestion and ate the forbidden fruit they came under the curse of sin and death. They were spiritually separated from God. They lost their innocence! They became self conscious and knew they were physically uncovered - naked before their maker. Sin had entered paradise! Adam and Eve's sin erected a barrier between them and their creator.

Down through the ages mankind has suffered from the results of Adam and Eve's choice. The tendency to sin and rebellion gained entrance into mankind. According to scripture *"The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he*

punishes the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation." Numbers 14:18 (NIV) When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior provision is made to break this cycle of sin. God's desire was for man to remain pure in his walk with Him, but God foreknew that Adam and Eve would chose to walk out of the perfect union with Him, breaking the fellowship. On the day Adam and Eve chose to follow their self will, as Satan lured them away from God's will, their sweet unsullied relationship with God was broken. A barrier of sin sprang up between God and man. We read in Isaiah 59:2 that sins cause God to hide His face from man.

God had determined, *"In fact, the law requires that everything be cleansed with blood and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."* Hebrews 9:22 (NIV) There was already a plan in the mind of God to reconcile mankind back to Himself. All through the Old Testament we read of the blood sacrifices of animals to atone (cover) sin. Scripture states there was a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8) That lamb was the perfect, unblemished Son of God, Jesus Christ. God literally gave himself, in the form of Jesus, to come to earth to reveal the true nature of God through the life Jesus lived. *"Then Jesus cried out, 'When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.'" John 23:44,45 (NIV)*

Jesus willingly went to the cross to provide the blood sacrifice for any man, woman, or child who would choose to renounce their sins and accept His sacrifice. He provided for every sin committed up to the time of His crucifixion on the cross. He provided for every sin committed since that time up to the present and He also provided for every sin to be committed until the end of the ages. In a mystery beyond our full comprehension God sent His Son, Jesus, to

earth to reveal the true heart of God, the Father, towards man, His creation.

Jesus bore the sins of all mankind as He hung on the cross-forsaken by His heavenly father. His nailed hands were still stretched out to humanity. His body was beaten, bruised and pierced. He suffered physical thirst, but more painful was His spiritual thirst, as He felt cut off from His Father's presence. He cried *"My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"* Matthew 27:46b (NIV)

There is a time in each person's life when he becomes accountable for making the decision to accept Jesus' payment for their sins. If he does decide to accept the restored fellowship with God, through receiving Jesus' blood sacrifice for these sins, then God's Holy Spirit takes up residency in his life. If he refuses the sacrifice and walks in self will (manifested as active rebellion or passive indifference) Satan has the role of master whether the person is conscious of this or not. There is no neutral ground. If a person does not choose Jesus they have chosen against Him. *"He who is not with me is against me."* Matthew 12:30a (NIV)

Steps to the New Birth

1. Recognize you are a sinner, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23 (NIV)
2. Believe Jesus Christ shed His blood for you on the cross and provided for your sins to be forgiven. *"But God demonstrated His own love toward us in this: while we were still sinners Christ died for us."* Romans 5:8 (NIV)
3. Repent (turn from your sins), *"I tell you, no, but unless you repent you too will all perish."* Luke 13:3 (NIV)
4. Confess/Receive Jesus by personal invitation, *"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

Romans 10:9 (NIV) *"Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."*
John 1:12 (NIV)

5. Follow Jesus' example and be baptized, *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."* Mark 16:16 (NIV)

The new birth is not merely an intellectual belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, it is also not simply an emotional experience. It is an act of a person's will to acknowledge their sins - repent, be baptized, and open the door of their heart (Revelation 3:20) and with these acts to invite Jesus in to rule and transform their life. In the new birth God's spirit - the Holy spirit - comes to dwell in man. Man then has the very life and nature of God within him to draw upon. He has been born again - born of the spirit of God.

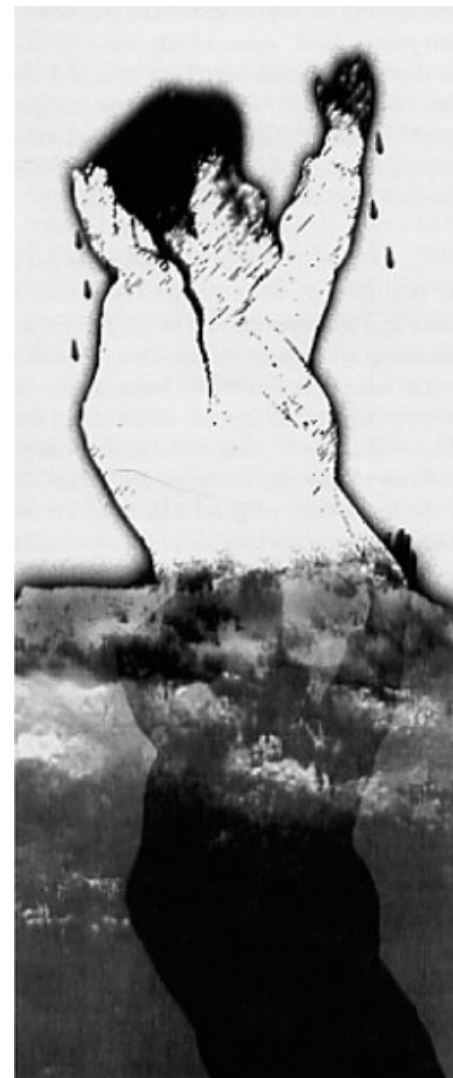
Suggested Prayer

Dear God in heaven I recognize I have sinned. I ask you to forgive every sin I have ever committed. I thank you that you provided a blood sacrifice for my sins through the death of your son Jesus Christ. I invite Jesus to come into my life and be my Lord and Savior. I thank you that according to John 1:12 I have the right to become your child because I believe in, and confess your name. I will follow Jesus' example and enter the waters of baptism and come up a new creation - born again - a son / daughter of God. *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."* Galatians 3:26-27 ***"IF ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST HE IS A NEW CREATION. Old things are passed away, behold all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation."*** II Corinthians 5:17 (NKJ)

Standing Strong in Your Decision

1. Read the Bible daily - praying for insight and understanding. Acts 17:11
2. Pray about everything. Phillipians 4:6-7
John 15:73
3. Unite with a God honoring body of believers where the Bible is accepted and preached as the infallible word of God. Hebrews 10:25
4. Cultivate a lifestyle of praise and worship. Psalms 107:1,2
5. Be a doer of the word and not a hearer only. James 1:22
6. Witness - go forth and live out your confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in each believer - testifying to His saving grace where ever the opportunity presents itself. Mark 16:15

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