

## THE THEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

This paper is meant to be read in conjunction with a copy of the booklet, *"Have you Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?"*

Romans 10:11-13, "For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon him; for 'Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

God has provided us with a means of salvation. He has also entrusted us with the responsibility of telling the world about this provision. Unfortunately the various religions and philosophies of the world tend to mislead people.

### FOUR COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SALVATION

**Religious Discipline:** Some religions teach that by rigorous religious discipline people may attain perfection and thus unity with God. This is typical of eastern religions.

**Good Works:** Others feel that by doing good works (helping others, giving away money) they will merit God's favor. They are hoping that their good works will outweigh their shortcomings.

**Philosophies:** Others think they will be accepted by God because of their wisdom. They develop a philosophy of life which they feel will impress God and cause him to accept them.



There are also some misconceptions about the Christian perspective of salvation.

**Pseudo-Christianity:** Some believe that by attending a Christian service from time to time (once a week or once a year), they are accepted by God.

Many have different ideas about how they can please God and gain His acceptance. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6).

In this document we will discuss the biblical basis of the "Four Spiritual Laws" and how this booklet is used to lead people to Christ.

Turn to law one in the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet.

### LAW 1

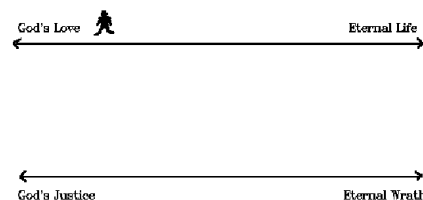
**God Loves You.** Jesus demonstrated love for the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-14). In the Old Testament God demonstrated His love for sinful people (Isaiah 1:18-20). The booklet begins with a positive statement, communicating God's love to the individual. Jesus would often begin positively before revealing a person's sin.

Jesus demonstrated love and acceptance to this Samaritan woman by talking with her. Even she is surprised by His friendliness in John 4: 9. However, it is important to realize that to say God loves people is not to say that God loves their sin, or that He will excuse them at the judgment. God loves

sinners, but hates their sin. Unless people repent or change their minds and turn to Christ instead of themselves for forgiveness of sin, they will not have eternal life.

God expresses His love and desire to fellowship with sinful people. Yet, this love does not negate His righteousness and His judgment of sin as explained in Isaiah 1:20.

**God offers a wonderful plan for your life.** His plans are for your welfare (Jeremiah 29:11). The life He offers us is a life of joy (Galatians 5:22). As we allow God's Spirit to control our lives, we will experience a satisfying life--a life of joy. Jesus is the source of the overflowing life (John 4:13, 14). Notice also that as Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman, He offered her new life, an overflowing life--a life which is eternal. John 10:10 explains that God's plan is not only for eternity, but also for today.



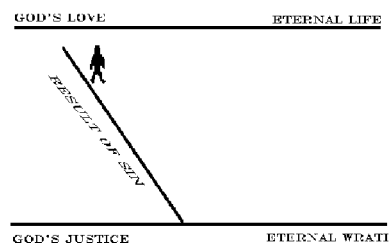
Turn to law two in the "Four Spiritual Laws."

## LAW 2

**Man is sinful and separated from God.**

Jesus reveals the Samaritan woman's sin (John 4:16-19). After first demonstrating His love and concern for the woman, Jesus began to reveal her sin. Before people can establish fellowship with God, they must first come to a clear understanding of the reason they do not have a relationship with Him.

**Man is sinful** (Romans 5:12-14). Man was created to have fellowship with God, but chose to go his own independent way. This sin nature that originated with Adam is now passed on to all human beings and results in spiritual death. God continues to love people but His righteous nature cannot love the sin that has become a part of everyone's nature. The moral decay in society is evidence of sin (Galatians 5:19-21). The fact that Adam's sin nature is passed on to all is evidenced by peoples' actions. Today's world is a testimony of continual rebellion and separation from God.



**Man cannot experience God's love and plan for his life.** These two parallel lines suggest two of God's characteristics: His love and His justice. Each characteristic is equally important and therefore each must be satisfied totally. In the beginning Adam had perfect fellowship with God. When man chose to rebel against God and go his independent way, fellowship with God was broken. Man entered into God's judgment and wrath. Sin has rendered man incapable of doing anything to save himself. No one is justified by the law (Galatians 3:11). No one is justified by works (Romans 3:27). No one can find God by practicing physical or religious disciplines. No matter how hard people try, they will never conquer their sin nature, nor will they manage to pay for past sins.

Turn to law three in the "Four Spiritual Laws."

## LAW 3

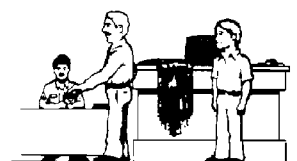
**Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin.** Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah to the

Samaritan woman (John 4:23-26). Earlier we saw how Jesus first expressed love to this woman, and then began to discuss her sin. We now see that He has revealed Himself as Messiah to her. This is His third major step in this witnessing situation.

Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins (1 John 4:9, 10). Jesus showed His love to various unlovable people such as tax collectors and prostitutes. The Bible clearly teaches that God loves sinners. Because of His love for sinners, He had to solve the problem of His judgment against sin. He did this through substitution. The cross is the place where Christ took our sins on Himself and endured God's wrath in our place. This is the ultimate demonstration of God's love for us. Even though we did not love Him, yet He loved us and sent His sinless Son to die for us. Jesus' death demonstrates God's love and satisfies His justice.



One day a man who was a judge tried his own son who was brought into court on a traffic violation. The judge was faced with his responsibility to pass sentence on the guilty one, but he was also full of compassion, since the guilty one was his son. Since he was just, the judge passed sentence on him and fined him, even though the boy was penniless. Then he took off his robe, came down from his place of authority, stood beside his son and paid the fine himself.



We were unable to pay the penalty for our sins. God passed the sentence of death on us, but stepped down from heaven in the person of Christ and paid the penalty for us by bearing our sins on the cross. Thus, He expressed His love for us, yet he did not violate what is just to do so.

**Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.**

He who believes in Jesus abides in God's love (1 John 4:15, 16). Here John explains that those who receive Christ abide in God and thus experience His love.

Jesus promised the Samaritan woman an abundant life (John 4:10-14). That is God's intention for every Christian.

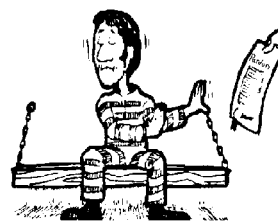
Turn to law four in the "Four Spiritual Laws."

#### **LAW 4**

**We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.**

The Samaritan woman repented (turned from self to Christ for forgiveness) and believed (John 4:26-29; 39-42). At the moment Jesus presented himself as the Messiah to the woman, she was left with a decision. She could either accept Him or reject Him. She chose to accept Him and proclaimed Him to the rest of the town.

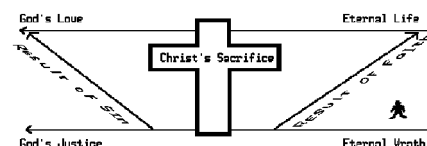
In 1830 George Wilson was tried by the United States court in Philadelphia for robbery and murder. Subsequently he was sentenced to be hanged. Andrew Jackson, President of the United States, granted him a Presidential pardon. But Wilson refused the pardon, insisting that it was not a pardon unless he accepted it. The question was brought before the Supreme Court, and Chief Justice Marshall wrote the following decision: 'A pardon is conditional upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must hang.' And he was hanged.



Wilson refused his pardon and people can refuse Jesus' pardon.

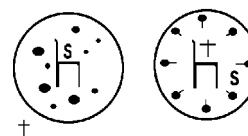
Each person has a choice: life or eternal judgment.

**Two destinies are offered to mankind** (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10; John 3:36). Salvation from the results of sin and establishment of a love relationship with God is accomplished as people put their faith or trust in Christ. Whether they place their trust in Christ or not determines their eternal destiny. Those who do not put their faith in Christ will be faced with eternal separation from God; while those who accept Christ and His death on the cross will have the promise of eternal life.



The most important decision in life is your decision to accept or reject Christ. Those who reject Him face an eternal judgment.

Look at the circles on the bottom of page 9 of the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet. The circles are intended to bring a person to the point of making a decision. They are not intended to imply that when we receive Christ, our lives immediately and automatically become perfect. But the emphasis is upon living a life in constant faith and dependence on Christ.



Now that we have considered the biblical basis for each of the four laws, let us concentrate on a central issue--faith. What is biblical faith and how is it presented in "The Four Spiritual laws" booklet?

## THE ISSUE OF FAITH

In the Old Testament we read that Abraham believed God (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3, 9). God justified Abraham through his faith. Animal sacrifices in the Old Testament were a temporary covering for sin, a help for people to understand the severity of sin. Old Testament believers were justified by faith. Animal sacrifices also symbolized a "type" of the coming Messiah, who as the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 30) and would take away the sins of the world.

We are told that the righteous will live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4).

In the New Testament we read that faith pleases God (Hebrews 11:6). The just shall live by faith (Galatians 2:16). God has given us His righteousness as a free gift apart from our works. Redemption is through the shed blood of Christ and is applied to our lives the moment we come to Christ in faith."

Prayer is an expression of faith. Believe and you shall receive (Mark 11:24). As we pray we express our faith or trust in God's ability to answer. We place our trust in God's provision through Christ."

Revelation 3:20 states "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.*" This is an invitation to have fellowship with Christ. It expresses His desire to have a relationship with man. By using this verse with non-believers, we make clear the fact that Christ desires a personal relationship with individuals. When a person responds by faith through prayer to Christ's invitation to open the door we can believe that Christ will do as He promised and come into his life. Now let's see how this is expressed on page 10 of the four spiritual laws booklet.

**This is the prayer in the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet.** "Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be." When you are sharing with a person and reach the prayer on page 10, be sure to make it clear that the prayer is an expression of faith. It is not the prayer that guarantees salvation. The prayer helps a person express his decision of faith to God, himself and others, to turn from self (repent) and trust Christ.

**These are some results of faith in Christ.** One result of faith is eternal life (John 5:24). The Bible assures a person of eternal life as a result of putting faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. However changes in lifestyle should also take place as a result. Another result of faith is a changed Life (2 Corinthians 5:17). When we receive Christ, the Holy Spirit enters our life and begins to change us from the inside. Old sinful habits which formerly were attractive become unattractive, and the Spirit replaces them with godly habits.

After reading this paper write down any questions that you may need to have clarified regarding the theology of the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet.