



# Steps in Faith 101

Break **through**

*Resources*

## **Are You Ready To Take This Step?**

Steps in Faith 101 is the first step of three Steps in Faith studies in a growing walk with God. Here is what you will experience in this next step on your spiritual journey:

### **Studies**

There are four lessons in Steps in Faith 101. You will learn about why you can trust the Bible, how you can know you have eternal life, knowing God in a personal way, and how to turn failure into forward progress. You may want to do these studies as part of your personal time with God.

### **Hiding God's Word in My Heart**

Each lesson has a relevant passage to add to your arsenal for spiritual battle. The "My Time with God" assignment will give you a suggestion each day to help you memorize the Scripture.

### **My Time with God**

Each study has a 5-day personal time with God that reinforces the teaching of the study, and guides you in developing a personal time with God. This personal time with God is one of the keys to consistent life change over time.

### **Your Mentor**

After you do the study, you will meet with your mentor who will be your partner in this step in your spiritual journey.

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# Is One Opinion As Good As Another?

How You Can Trust God's Opinion  
As Revealed In The Bible

**Something To Think About:** What makes an opinion trustworthy or authoritative?

In reality, every person has an authority source that becomes the basis of his opinions and decision-making. What are pro's and con's of the sources of authority below?

Four Sources of Authority		
Source	Pro's	Con's
• Organizations or People		
• Experience		
• Education		
• The Bible		

## How Do We Know the Bible Is God's Word?

Most people in the world today would say "The Bible is just another book. Sure it has some interesting stories but everything it says isn't really true." However, the Bible is a unique book. Its uniqueness is one of the reasons we can trust what it says.

According to Wycliffe Bible Translators, as of October 2017 at least some portion of the Bible has been translated into over 3,000 languages. It is the most translated and published book in history, and it is the **number one best seller of all time**. It has stood the tests of time, persecution, and criticism. Can you think of another book or collection of writings that has influenced the world as much as the Bible has?

Let's look at some of what makes the Bible unique.

### ▪ **Its Authorship**

#### • Humanly speaking ...

- ◆ Over 40 different people wrote the Bible over a span of about 1500 years.
- ◆ They wrote on three continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe
- ◆ The Bible was originally written in three languages—Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic
- ◆ The human authors were kings, generals, political leaders, a teacher, a doctor, a tax collector, shepherds, fishermen, prophets and poets. Many were eyewitnesses, or their sources were eyewitnesses to the events.
- ◆ The Bible uses various literary styles including historical narrative, poetry, song, letters (epistles), biography, autobiography, law, prophecy, parable, and allegory.
- ◆ Yet, with all of this, the Bible has complete unity in facts and truth.

#### • Divinely speaking ...

### **What does 1 Thessalonians 2:13 say about the Bible?**

*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the \_\_\_\_\_ which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of \_\_\_\_\_, but as it is in truth, the \_\_\_\_\_, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

▪ **Its Preservation** (*Mark one statement that is of interest to you.*)

All of that may be true, but how do we know that the Bible is authentic? After all, it has been about 2,000 years since the last book of the Bible was written around 95 AD. How does the Bible compare to secular literature?

• Secular evidence:

There is little question of the authenticity of the classic works of **Plato**, for we have **seven copies** of his writings dating back to 900 AD, which is only 1300 years after he originally wrote them.<sup>[1]</sup> Today's copies of **Homer's** classic poem **Iliad** are considered authentic. We have **643 copies** of this work some dating back to 400 BC only 400 years after he wrote it<sup>[2]</sup> with which we can compare. With so many ancient copies, how could anyone question their authenticity?

[1] J. McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, pp 38

[2] J. McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, pp 38

• New Testament evidence

The **New Testament** however seems to be a different story. Our oldest copies of it are written 225 years after the original writing. Some incomplete portions are only 50 years from their original penning. We have about **5,366 copies** in the **Greek** language with which we can verify our current New Testament. If we want to consider **other languages**, there are another **19,200 manuscripts** to check with. All **totalled** there are nearly **25,000 manuscript copies** of the New Testament. Our New Testament is trustworthy.

• Old Testament evidence

The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible is just as trustworthy. The **Jewish scribes that copied the Hebrew Bible did so with extraordinary care** and attention to detail. They **counted every word** to make sure none were left out or added. They even **counted the number of times each letter** was used in a book.

These painstaking details were checked to ensure that a copy was certifiably correct. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 allowed scholars to verify the accuracy of our oldest Hebrew Bibles from around 900 AD. They were able to compare them with scrolls from about 100 BC. A comparison of Isaiah 53 which contains 166 words found only one word in question after 1,000 years of transmission<sup>[3]</sup>. Our Old Testament is trustworthy too.

<sup>[3]</sup> J. McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, p.78

What does God say about the preservation of the Bible in Psalm 119:89-90?

\_\_\_\_\_, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all \_\_\_\_\_: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.

## ▪ Its Historical Accuracy

### Historicity

- The Old Testament records the names and their countries of 40 kings living from 2000 BC to 400 BC in chronological order.
- “With reference to the kings of the same country and with respect to the kings of other countries... no stronger evidence for the substantial accuracy of the Old Testament records could possibly be imagined, than this collection of kings .” Professor Robert Wilson<sup>[4]</sup>

<sup>[4]</sup> J McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, p. 71.

### Archaeologically

- An excavation of the city of Jericho in the 1930’s revealed that the city walls had fallen outward. This is most unusual since normally city walls fall inward; it does however match with the Biblical account of the destruction of that city.
- As an example of the accuracy of the Biblical record, a burial site in Jerusalem was found in 1968 that contained the bones of a young man with a seven inch nail driven through both feet into a wood beam. His arms also showed evidence of nails and his legs were crushed. <sup>[5]</sup>

<sup>[5]</sup> J. McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict*, Chapters 3&4



- “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.”<sup>[6]</sup>

Jewish archaeologist Nelson Glueck

*[6] J. McDowell, The New Evidence That Demands A Verdict, pp 61*

What did Jesus say that would explain the historical reliability and accuracy of the Bible in John 17:17?

*Sanctify them through thy \_\_\_\_\_; thy \_\_\_\_\_ is truth.*

### ▪ **Its Historical Prophecies**

According to Deuteronomy 18:22, what was God’s standard of accuracy for a prophet to be of God? \_\_\_\_\_

There are 1,817 prophecies in the Bible, most of which have come true already. (J. Barton Payne’s *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*) The Christian apologist Mark Cahill writes,

*“If only eight of those 300 prophecies came true in any one person, it would be comparable to this:*

*Build a small fence around the state of Texas, Fill it two feet deep in silver dollars, Paint one of them red, Mix them all up, Then – starting at the Louisiana border – walk blindfolded as far into Texas as you want to go, Then lean over, still blindfolded, And pick up the red silver dollar.*

*...those are the odds for eight prophecies coming true in one person. But Jesus had more than 300 prophecies about Him come true.” (From One Heartbeat Away, p. 79)*

Isaiah 7:14 prophesied of Messiah (the promised redeemer) in 701 BC.

*Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

Read Matthew 1:18-25 telling of events hundreds of years following Isaiah’s prophecy. What does this tell you about the accuracy of the Bible?

▪ **Its Testimony: What does the Bible say about itself?**

- 2 Timothy 3:16

- 2 Peter 1:20-21

- Matthew 5:17-18

God has given us His opinion on every aspect of our lives. He even wrote it down for us, in His book the Bible. It is proven trustworthy by its authorship, its historical accuracy, its accurate prophecies and its preservation. In the end, there is really only one opinion that counts—God’s.

The Bible says...

*“Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.”*  
Psalm 119:128

In your own words, what is God saying in this verse?

**The BIG question: Am I willing to accept God’s Authority?**

## **My Time With God**

Scripture Memory: "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Psalm 119:128

Day 1

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment two times.

Read: Hebrews 4:12

Reflect: What does this tell you about God's Word?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 2

Day & Date:

Repeat your Scripture memory assignment aloud three times. Try saying it without looking.

Read: John 8:31-32

Reflect: What does this tell you about God's Word?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 3

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment. Repeat it aloud.

Read: 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Reflect: What does this tell you about God's Word?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 4

Day & Date:

Remember: Can you quote the Scripture memory assignment? Keep working on it.

Read: Psalm 119:105

Reflect: What does this tell you about God's Word?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 5

Day & Date:

Remember: By now you are really familiar with the memory assignment. Rehearse it twice.

Read: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Reflect: What does this tell you about God's Word?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

# **Finders Keepers**

## **How to Know You Can Find Eternal Life and Never Lose It**

**Something to Think About:** “Finders Keepers. Losers Weepers.” Do you remember that kid’s rhyme? In most things it doesn’t matter, but when it comes to one’s eternal soul, it matters! Which of the following have you heard or thought?

- You can’t know where you will spend eternity.
- If you do more good than bad, you will go to heaven.
- As long as you’re living right, you will go to heaven.
- I think I’m OK.
- I’m as good as the next person, so I am OK.
- I believe in God.
- Other?

**In this study, we will look at the Bible to discover  
how to know you can find eternal life and never lose it.**

## **I. The Promise of the Lord**

- What does the Lord promise? \_\_\_\_\_  
John 3:36; John 5:24; John 6:40, 47; John 10:28-30; 1 John 2:25

## **II. The Problem of Man**

- What is man's problem? \_\_\_\_\_  
Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12; Romans 3:23
- What is man's penalty? \_\_\_\_\_  
Psalm 9:17; Ezekiel 18:20

## **III. The Provision of the Lord**

- What gift can the Lord give? \_\_\_\_\_  
Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9

## **IV. The Payment of the Lord**

- How did the Lord pay for the gift of eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Timothy 2:3-6; Eph. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:18-21; 1 Peter 3:18
- What was Jesus' proof of purchase? \_\_\_\_\_  
1 Peter 1:3, 4; Romans 1:3, 4
- What does the Lord give us in exchange for our sin? \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Corinthians 5:21

## V. The Personal Response to the Lord

You are either in Christ or without Christ depending on your personal response. How do the following passages contrast those in Christ and those without Christ?



### In Christ

■ \_\_\_\_\_

■ \_\_\_\_\_

■ \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 6:23

John 3:16-18

Luke 13:3

### Without Christ

■ \_\_\_\_\_

■ \_\_\_\_\_

■ \_\_\_\_\_

## IV. The Power of the Lord

You can be saved from sin and punishment and know it

### How Can I Know? Consider the Following...

- **Biblical Testimony**

Based on what you have studied so far what does God's Word say about it?

- **The Holy Spirit's Testimony** – 1 John 3:24b; 4:13

Based on these passages, what does the Holy Spirit confirm in a person's heart?

- **More Biblical Teaching – I John 5:11-13**

*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

According to God’s record, God gives people eternal life on the basis of their relationship with whom?

*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*

Who has life?

Who does not have life?

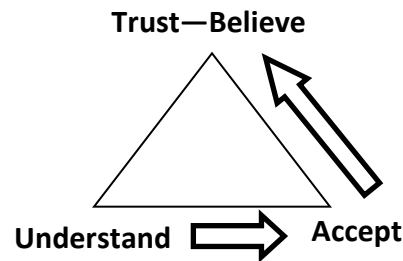
*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

If an individual personally believes on Jesus Christ as the payment for his or her sin, what can that person know?

**What About You?** Based on the Biblical testimony, the Holy Spirit’s testimony in your heart, and the Biblical teaching you have studied, What about you? Are you in Christ or without Christ? Before you answer that question, consider what saving faith is.

**Saving Faith**

Saving faith is more than agreeing to or understanding the facts, but personally, individually receiving God’s gracious gift by receiving Jesus Christ and His offer of the forgiveness of sins.



**What is holding you back?**

**So, how can I know? There is one more truth that will help you settle this.**

- **Biblical Trusting**

Circle which is more reliable as you read the pairings below.

Your Feelings or God's Facts

Your Performance or God's Provision

Your Power or God's Power

Biblical trusting means I trust what God says in His Word. Why do you think one's trust must be based in the truth of God's Word?

How does this overcome doubt, fear and personal failure in regards to salvation?

**"Finders Keepers. Losers Weepers."**

**When it comes to one's eternal soul, it matters.**

Can you **KNOW**?      Yes       No

**DO** you know?      Yes       No

In your own words, how can one know based on the Scriptures?



## My Time With God

Scripture Memory: 1 John 5:11-13 <sup>11</sup>“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. <sup>12</sup>He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. <sup>13</sup>These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

Day 1

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment two times.

Read: Is. 53:6; Ephesians 2:1

Reflect: What does this tell you about your old life before Christ?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 2

Day & Date:

Repeat your Scripture memory assignment aloud three times. Try saying it without looking.

Read: John 1:12; John 3:5-7

Reflect: What does this tell you about your new life in Christ?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 3

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment. Repeat it aloud.

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:15

Reflect: What does this tell you about your new life in Christ?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 4

Day & Date:

Remember: Can you quote the Scripture memory assignment? Keep working on it.

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:17

Reflect: What does this tell you about your new life in Christ?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 5

Day & Date:

Remember: By now you are really familiar with the memory assignment. Rehearse it twice.

Read: John 10:28-30

Reflect: What does this tell you about your new life in Christ?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...



# Sure, I Believe In God, But I Really Don't Know Him

How Knowing What God Is Like Can Make All The  
Difference In Your Life

"What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.... Worship is pure or base as the worshipper entertains high or low thoughts of God. For this reason the gravest question before the Church is always God Himself, and the most portentous fact about any man is not what he at a given time may say or do, but what he in his deep heart conceives God to be like."

A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, page 9

Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

We will discover what God is like, so you can know Him! There is more to know about Him, but in this study identify the attribute with the Scriptures' teaching:

**Faithful, Unchanging, Holy, Eternal, Love, Creator**

## 6 Key Attributes of God

1. God is \_\_\_\_\_ Deut. 33:27; Is. 40:28 1 Tim. 1:17, Rom. 1:20

### What Does It Mean?

God has always been and always will be.

### What Difference Does It Make In My Life?

- **Everything God Does has an Eternal Perspective.**

It is impossible for us to imagine an eternal perspective since all we experience is bound by time. Imagine you are on the sidewalk along a parade route. One by one you see bands, clowns, floats, and all the elements of the parade procession. Now imagine you are in the Goodyear blimp floating above the parade route. How would this change your perspective? How does this apply to God's perspective of your life?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 describes how God's perspective transforms our perspective. How does considering God's eternal perspective affect our perspective of...

- ◆ Fainting (4:16)?
- ◆ Affliction (4:17)?
- ◆ Life's Focus [look] (4:18)?

- **Everything God Does has an Eternal Purpose.**

According to Ephesians 3:10-12 "the wisdom of God" is on display through Jesus Christ and His church, "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him."

Looking at the past, present, or future, how have you seen or could anticipate God's eternal purposes being fulfilled?

2. God is \_\_\_\_\_ Mal. 3:6; James 1:17; Ps. 102:25-27

Another term that is sometimes used is that God is immutable.

### What Does It Mean?

God never changes.

### What Difference Does It Make In My Life?

- I can always trust Him to **be** who He says He is.
- I can always trust Him to **do** what He says He will do.

**Think About It:** What would it be like to have a relationship with someone you could depend on with absolute certainty? How does God's unchanging character encourage your relationship with Him?

3. God is \_\_\_\_\_ Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8; Psalm 99:9; Is. 57:15

### What Does It Mean?

- God is absolutely pure and without sin.
- God is absolutely just and must judge sin.

Imagine a white sheep in a green field. The sheep appears perfectly white. Now imagine that sheep in a snow-covered field. How white does the sheep look now?

How does this describe a person—even a good person—compared to a holy God?

Now imagine a judge whose brother, whom he loved deeply, stood before him for a crime of which he was guilty. Would he be a just judge if he overlooked his brother's crime, even though he loved his brother?

Could God be a holy, just God and overlook sin? Why or why not?

### What Difference Does It Make In My Life?

True or False?

God's holiness magnifies my sinfulness, and God's holiness demands His justice.

4. God is the \_\_\_\_\_ Gen. 1:1; Jer. 32:17, 26-27; Ps. 33:6-9; Col. 1:16

#### What Does It Mean?

In future studies in this series you will study this subject Scripturally and scientifically. For now, what does the fact that God created a functioning universe out of nothing by His Word tell you about His power?

According to Genesis 3:8-9, when Adam and Eve chose to disregard God and choose their own way what did they do? What did God do?

Does this indicate God is impersonal and uninvolved or personal and individually concerned about people?

#### What Difference Does It Make In My Life?

Which passage corresponds with the following statements:

Psalm 139:1-6, 12-17; Jer. 32:26-27; Gen 3:16-18

- God has the power to do all that He says He can do.
- God knows me individually.
- I am accountable to Him personally.

What do you think or question about these Scriptural realities?

5. God is \_\_\_\_\_ I John 4:8; 4:16

#### What Does It Mean?

“Love is a self-sacrificing desire for and delight in the welfare of the one loved.” - R.A. Torrey (*The God of the Bible* p. 169)

How is this different from what people often think of “love?”

## What Difference Does It Make In My Life?

- According to Romans 5:6-8, does God love me because of who He is or because of what I do?
- According to 1 John 3:16 and 4:9-10, how can I know God always does what is best for me?
- When the Lord corrects me, why does He do so? Hebrews 12:5-7, 11

6. God is \_\_\_\_\_ Lam. 3:22-23; Psalm 89:33-34

### What Does It Mean?

God Always Holds Up His End of the Bargain.

### What Difference Does It Make In My Life?

I can count on God ...

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Cor. 10:13
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 John 1:9
- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 Thess. 5:24

What encourages you most about the difference God's faithfulness can make in your life?

### What Is Life All About? Jeremiah 9:23-24

<sup>23</sup>Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches:

<sup>24</sup>But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.

## My Time With God

Scripture Memory: Jeremiah 9:23-24 <sup>23</sup>Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: <sup>24</sup>But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."

Day 1

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment two times.

Read: Psalm 139:1-6

Reflect: What does this tell you about God?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 2

Day & Date:

Repeat your Scripture memory assignment aloud three times. Try saying it without looking.

Read: Psalm 139:7-12

Reflect: What does this tell you about God?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 3

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment. Repeat it aloud.

Read: Psalm 139:13-18

Reflect: What does this tell you about God?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 4

Day & Date:

Remember: Can you quote the Scripture memory assignment? Keep working on it.

Read: Psalm 139:19-24

Reflect: What does this tell you about God?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 5

Day & Date:

Remember: By now you are really familiar with the memory assignment. Rehearse it twice.

Read: 2 Peter 1:2, 3:18

Reflect: What does this tell you about knowing God?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

# Failing Forward

## How God Turns Spiritual Failure into Forward Progress

### What Does Joe Need To Know?

My name is Joe. I came to Jesus Christ a few years ago, but I did not really grow in my relationship with God. Recently I began a class that has been helping me understand how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. I was talking to one of my co-workers the other day, and he made an “off color” remark. I would have answered back with an “off color” remark of my own as I have done thousands of times before without a second thought, but the other day I paused for a moment. I knew the remark would be a sin against God, but I made it anyway. As soon as I did it, I felt terrible. I know a person can’t lose his salvation, but could a person who is really saved sin like this? Why did I want to sin? I asked God to forgive me, but I don’t feel any better. In fact, I just want to give up. I do know that I want to please God in my heart. I just don’t know what to do after my failure.

### So, What Does Joe Need to Know?



## I. Principles for Failing Forward

### Key Truths to Understand

- The Battle Within: The Two Natures

When a person is born again by faith in Jesus Christ, he has a new nature that wants to please God and fellowship with God. Unfortunately, the old nature that wants to please oneself is still present. These two natures create conflict that is part of the new life in Christ. How do the Scriptures below identify them?

Ephesians 4:22-24

The \_\_\_\_\_ vs. The \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:16-17

The \_\_\_\_\_ vs. The \_\_\_\_\_

Based on what you have just studied, what observations do you have?

- The Dynamic of a Relationship with God: Two Relationship Statuses

*Answer the following questions that explain the two relationship statuses*

Sonship: According to Galatians 3:26, what is the basis of Sonship?

Will your Sonship ever change? Why or why not?

Fellowship: As you read 1 John 1:5-9, answer the following questions

According to verse 7, what is the basis of fellowship with God?

According to verse 5, what does “walk[ing] in the light” mean?

According to verse 8, does anyone ever reach God’s standard of perfection?

According to verse 9, what is the basis of restoration to fellowship with God?

**Explain it! How does the following diagram illustrate sonship and fellowship?**


Sonship

**God’s Promise of Our Eternal Sonship — Galatians 3:26**

Our Sonship is as unchangeable as God’s promise  
 —————→  
 God promised we will always be His child

Fellowship

**Our Fellowship Depends on our Obedience — 1 John 1:7-9**

As we fail forward, our fellowship is constantly changing.  
  
 Our fellowship is broken by sin and restored by Biblical confession.

**After I fail, how do I move forward in my relationship with God?**

## Key Texts To Understand

- The Reason for Temptation and Testing - James 1:13-14

What is the pull to sin that I experience?

- The Reality of Restoration: God's Plan For Restored Fellowship 1 John 1:9

### 1. Confession:

Confession involves accepting responsibility for sin, an active desire to turn from it, and asking God's forgiveness. Is it biblical confession if a person acknowledges sin but does not actively turn from it?

### 2. Cleansing and Forgiveness:

According to the Scripture, who forgives and cleanses sin?

According to the Scripture, how do you know God forgives (even if you don't "feel forgiven")?

What is the most reliable basis for your forgiveness—God's promises or your feelings?

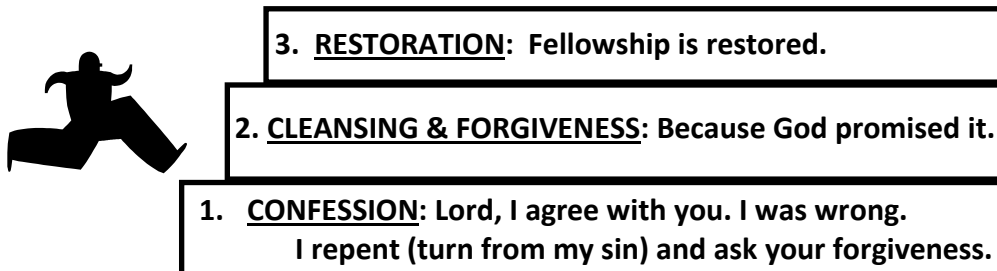
According to Scripture, is God's cleansing and forgiveness guaranteed or not?

### 3. Restoration:

How do I know I am restored to fellowship with God?

What do you call it when you take God at His Word?

Explain it! How does the following diagram illustrate restoration to fellowship?



### **But I Can't Forgive Myself!**

Have you ever heard someone say that? How do I get past the remorse of sin? You do so in the same way you accept the forgiveness and cleansing from sin—by faith. If God has forgiven it, what right do you have to hold on to it? It will only lead you to defeat and excuse-making for not going forward. In reality, the only reason you “can’t forgive yourself” is because you are holding on to the guilt rather than accepting God’s restoration. In effect, you are putting your feelings above God’s promises. If that is you, it’s time to repent of your lack of faith and rest in God’s promise. After all, God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

## **II. A Profile in Failing Forward—Simon Peter**

One of the “greats of all time” was a profile in failing forward. Let’s consider his failing forward story to encourage us in our failing forward story.

- Pride: Matthew 26:31-35

On the night Jesus was arrested, according to Matthew 26:31-35, what indicated Peter’s pride?

- Failure: Matthew 26:69-75

What do you observe about the failure of Peter?

- Restoration: John 21:15-22

Following the Lord’s resurrection, He and Peter had a breakfast meeting. What was the issue Jesus asked about that motivates people to fail forward?

What was the task Jesus gave Peter to do that shows us all we can fail forward?

**Every disciple of the Lord Jesus fails.  
Let Him make your story a “Failing Forward” story!**

## **Failing Forward: How God Turns Spiritual Failure into Forward Progress**

Scripture Memory: 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Day 1

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment two times.

Read: Psalm 51:1-2

Reflect: What about God's character helps me to fail forward?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 2

Day & Date:

Repeat your Scripture memory assignment aloud three times. Try saying it without looking.

Read: Psalm 51:3-4

Reflect: What attitude must I have to fail forward?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 3

Day & Date:

Remember: Write your Scripture memory assignment. Repeat it aloud.

Read: Psalm 51:7-10

Reflect: What can God give me as I fail forward?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 4

Day & Date:

Remember: Can you quote the Scripture memory assignment? Keep working on it.

Read: Psalm 51:12-13

Reflect: What is possible for me when I fail forward ?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

Day 5

Day & Date:

Remember: By now you are really familiar with the memory assignment. Rehearse it twice.

Read: Psalm 51:16-17

Reflect: What do I need as I fail forward?

Record: Write how what God has shown you today applies to your life.

Request: Lord, today I ask you to...

