

The **BATTLE PLAN** *for* **PRAYER**

FROM BASIC TRAINING TO TARGETED STRATEGIES

PART III: CONDITIONING

LESSON 4

VERTICAL: The Cross of Christ

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. (1 Pet. 2: 24)

The primary reason why many religious people can never seem to show much evidence of answered prayers in their lives is because they've never truly entered into a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ. They have religion and know about God, but they don't truly have a relationship and know Him personally.

Jesus warned, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?' Then I will announce to them, 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreakers!'" (Matt. 7:21–23 hcsb) Admittedly, this is one of the most terrifying passages in the Bible. But Jesus is not trying to haunt us with these words. He's trying to help us.

So before diving into what all is involved in developing a more vibrant and effective prayer life, the first place for anyone to start is by pausing to make sure they've even begun a genuine relationship with God in the first place.

The apostle Paul said, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" (2 Corinthians 13: 5)

If you think you're going to heaven simply because you're a good person, because you walked an aisle, because you prayed a prayer, because you were dedicated or baptized, because you joined a church and now actively serve as a volunteer, you should be very concerned. For while all of these things are honorable, none of them can save you. Notice how you are the only person mentioned in each of these situations, not God. The scribes and Pharisees also did things like these, but they didn't know God. That's why He repeatedly warned them they would be condemned at the final judgment despite their self-assurances that they were fine. (Matthew 23: 13–33)

Regardless of your denominational preferences a relationship with God must begin with repentance and faith in the cross of Jesus Christ. Yes, this may sound narrow to some. But there are significant reasons why Scripture points to Jesus alone as being God's provided Messiah to bridge the gap and redeem sinful people back into a loving relationship with a perfect God.

God is the One, not people, who establishes the righteous requirements for knowing Him, praying to Him, and spending an eternity with Him. We are foolish and prideful to think we get to decide these things for ourselves. That's like preschoolers on a playground arguing with each other about the rules, testing standards, and course requirements of their education. They don't have the understanding or authority to decide.

God alone created us, knows us, and possesses all authority in heaven and earth. His ways are much higher than our ways. So the real question is not "What do I think God should do?" but rather "What has He decided?" This includes morality, judgment, salvation, and (for our purposes) prayer. We don't tell God how we've decided to relate to Him and please Him, or how we will approach Him in prayer, or what and when prayers will be answered.

We must realize that when Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6), He wasn't being prideful. He was being truthful. Being able to take the hand of God and the hand of man and bring them together, one would need to be heavenly and earthly, as well as, holy and human. And Jesus was.

Paul said, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all". (1 Timothy 2:5-6) A mediator must be equal to both parties—which is why God needed to become flesh and personally provide the perfect sacrifice for our sin that His holy standards required. Because we could not.

The entire life of Jesus Christ sets Him apart as being uniquely from God and qualified to accomplish this task. The sixty-six books of the Bible fit perfectly together like a puzzle, and they point to Jesus as God's solution to our human spiritual condition. (John 5:37-40)

The four historical accounts of Jesus' life in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John share detailed testimonies about His birth, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection. And the theological books of Romans through Revelation explain how God was spiritually offering us a means to salvation through Christ and why His death on the cross satisfied the holiness, justice, and wrath of God against sin, while simultaneously extending the merciful kindness, grace, and love of God to any sinner who is willing to trust Him by faith.

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The book of Hebrews explains that Jesus Christ alone fulfilled every one of God’s requirements for a Savior, including being a sinless, blood sacrifice as punishment for sin (Lev. 17:11), the fulfillment of God’s law (Heb. 9:19–22), the establishment of a perfect covenant between us and God (Heb. 8: 6), and an endless priesthood that could forever carry out this covenant. (Heb. 7:20–28) No other religious leader comes even close to being able to do, explain, or provide what Christ has for us.

But that’s all right, because Jesus also lovingly offers a salvation that is all-inclusive in its reach, meaning that anyone, anywhere can be saved. (John 3:16; 1 John 2:1–3) So to say that “Christ alone” is too narrow of a truth is actually the opposite of the truth, because anything but Christ will not reach all, deal with the sins of all, or offer eternal life beyond the grave to “whoever will call on the name of the Lord”. (Romans 10:13)

In addition to this, salvation that comes by grace through faith separates Christianity from every other religion in the world. God offers us forgiveness and eternal life as a free gift (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8–9), rather than requiring us to spend a lifetime of sacrifice trying to earn heaven and God’s forgiveness through a list of seemingly impossible religious rituals. He does this to reveal His loving-kindness and great mercy and is glorified when we receive His gift by faith.

As Scripture says, “He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”. (Titus 3:5–7)

With this in mind, it is important to make sure we submit to God’s plan and are saved God’s way through Jesus, not on our own. Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”. (John 3:3) Salvation comes from the Lord, not man. It is a spiritual transformation God brings about within someone’s heart and life. No individual or church can manufacture it. But God does it as we repent and trust Christ alone by faith.

His Word says, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation” (Romans 10:9–10).

So what about you? What or who are you trusting in? Yourself, your church, your goodness, your upbringing? Or Jesus? Have you truly been born again as Jesus said must happen?

Eternity is too long to be wrong about your ultimate destiny. The book of First John gives us seven key salvation indicators that help a person determine if they truly know God or not. We challenge you to test yourself using the biblical guidelines that appear at the end of this chapter. When you read through them, ask if these “fruits of true salvation” are currently in your life.

If you’ve discovered you may not truly know God through Christ, then we invite you now to repent of your sins, repent of trusting in yourself, and place your faith now in surrender to Jesus Christ, trusting in His cross alone for salvation.

What we’ve just discussed is the first step in fulfilling the purpose of this book. If you’ve repented and trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is the foundation for a strong prayer life. The Bible says God is, therefore, your heavenly Father (John 1:12), you are His beloved child (Ephesians 1:5–6), His Holy Spirit has entered your heart (Ephesians 1:13–14), you’ve been redeemed and cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Ephesians 1:7), and you now have access and freedom to approach God boldly in prayer (Ephesians 3:12). This is what knowing Christ does for us, not to mention opening up for us an amazing prayer communication line with God!

Beyond this, learning to grow in intimacy, faith, and closeness with God will be the next steps in building upon this foundation.

PRAYER: *Heavenly Father, I come to You by faith in Jesus Christ, Your Son, and through His shed blood on the cross as just payment for my sins. I confess that I am a sinner and that I believe Jesus Christ died for me and rose again from the grave proving that He’s the Son of God. I acknowledge my faith in You and confess Jesus now as my Lord and Savior forever. I thank You for reaching out to me in love and for providing a way for people to be forgiven and know You and spend an eternity with You. Help me live out my identity in Christ and to humbly walk in obedience and love to Your leadership and commands. Help me take full advantage of the access I’ve been given through Christ to approach You daily in prayer. In Jesus’ name, I pray, amen.*

Seven Indicators of True Salvation

If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would the evidence of your life be overwhelmingly clear that you know Christ and that He knows you? Genuine salvation is a life-changing experience. “If anyone is in Christ, he is

a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5: 17).

Good works do not remove sins, nor can they save anyone. But after a person is genuinely saved and is truly transformed by Christ, specific good works will start showing up as evidence or proof of their salvation. These seven things are not the cause or roots of salvation, but they are the fruits of true salvation. The book of 1 John gives us seven key indicators of genuine salvation revealing that someone is truly saved and knows God.

Indicator 1: A lifestyle of obedience to God.

Though Christians stumble and make mistakes, the big picture direction and habit of a true believer becomes one of submission and obedience to Christ. They will want to read and follow God’s Word. The Holy Spirit in their lives bends them toward greater and greater obedience. What about you? Have you been living a lifestyle of obedience toward God? “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked” (1 John 2: 3– 6).

Indicator 2: A confession of Jesus as the Christ, God’s Son.

First John 2: 22– 23 says, “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.” While cults communicate that Jesus was merely a good teacher or prophet, God’s Word says He is the Christ, the sinless Son of God, and the Lord of all. Do you openly confess that Jesus Christ is God’s Son, or do you believe Him to be merely a good teacher or prophet?

Indicator 3: A lifestyle of repentance of sin.

Jesus said, “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13: 3). Though we all stumble in many ways (James 3: 2), true believers will be confessing and turning away from sin, while false believers will not. First John 3: 9– 10 (niv) says, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.”

Indicator 4: Genuine love for other believers.

“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (1 John 3:14-15) God’s Spirit pours out God’s loves into the hearts of God’s children. (Rom. 5:5; Galatians 5:22) Do you have a genuine love for other believers?

Indicator 5: The discipline of God your Father.

“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.” (1 John 3:1) Even as a loving earthy father disciplines his children, God promises to discipline His children when they get out of line. He says this is one of the evidences of true salvation. “God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons...All discipline for moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” (Hebrews 12:7-8, 11) Have you experienced the clear disciplined of your heavenly Father in your life?

Indicator 6: The presence of God’s Holy Spirit.

“This is how we know that He lives in us: We know it by the Spirit He gave us.” (1 John 3:24 NIV) If you are a true believer, then God’s Spirit is in you and will testify with your spirit that you are the child of God. (Romans 8:16) He will also convict you when you sin (John 16:8), reveal what God’s Word says when you read it (John 14:26), and pour genuine love, joy and peace in and through you toward others (Galatians 5:22-23). Have you been experiencing these evidences of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Indicator 7: Faith in Jesus alone for salvation (not of yourself).

“He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:12-13 NIV) Or as Paul said in Philippians 3:9, “Not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.” Have you been trusting in Jesus alone for your salvation, or trusting yourself or your church?

These seven indicators are signs of a changed life—litmus tests revealing whether God has really made you a new creation or not. They don’t come naturally and are impossible to fake long-term. The world, the flesh, and the devil are all against you doing these things and will push in the opposite

direction from them. But if you look at your life over the past few months from a fifty-thousand-foot view, do you see these things?

Do you see a genuine love for other believers? Or not?

Obedience to God? Or not?

The discipline of your Father? Or not?

The evidence of God's Spirit? Or not?

A genuine faith in Jesus alone for salvation? Or not?

If these indicators reveal a true relationship with Christ, then rejoice and rest in it. If they do not, then don't put off the command of Scripture to repent and believe in Jesus Christ, placing your faith in Him alone for genuine salvation.

Kendrick, Stephen; Kendrick, Alex (2015-07-05). *The Battle Plan for Prayer: From Basic Training to Targeted Strategies* (Kindle Locations 1051-1058). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

HOMEWORK:

1. Why many 'religious' people can never seem to show much evidence of answered prayers in their lives is the **PRIMARY REASON**—because they've **NEVER** truly enter into what?
2. **Y N NS:** Do you believe your deaf church people are 'the religious deaf people' and they know about God.
3. **Y N NS:** Be honest yourself—do you truly have a relationship and know Him personally?
4. Jesus will announce to them, "I _____ knew you! Depart from Me, you lawbreaker!" The word "knew" in Greek word '*ginosko*', that means 'to become acquainted with, Jewish idiom for sexual intercourse between a man and a woman'.
5. **Y N NS:** Are you admit that this verses of Matthew 7:21-23 terrifying haunting you?
6. So before you jump into what [lessons from Fall and this Winter Class] all is involved in developing a more vibrant and effective prayer life, the first place for anyone to start is by _____ to make sure they've begun a genuine [true] relationship with God in the first place.

☞ Paul said, “_____ yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed [truly] you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5) or The Living Bible quotes, “Check up on yourselves. Are you really Christians? Do you pass the test? Do you feel Christ’s presence and power more and more within you? Or are you just pretending to be Christians when actually you aren’t at all?”

❖ **CHECK UP:** If you think you’re going to heaven simply because:

- you prayed a prayer
- you’re dedicated
- you’re good person
- you began with repentance and faith in the cross of Jesus Christ
- you walk an aisle
- you’re baptized
- you joined a church and now actively serve as a volunteer

❖ The scribes and Pharisees who

- have a relationship with God and know Him personally through the faith in Jesus as their Messiah to bridge the gap and redeem them as ‘sinful people’ back into a loving relationship with a perfect God and ended up in where?

- are ‘religious people’ and didn’t know God and ended up in where?

7. Who establishes the righteous requirements for knowing God, praying to God, and spending an eternity with God?

8. We ‘religious people’ are foolish and prideful to think we get to decide these things for who? _____ We ‘religious people are like _____ on a playground arguing with each other about the rules, testing standards, and course requirements of their education. We ‘religious people’ _____ have the understanding or authority to decide.

9. Who alone created you, knows you, and possesses all authority in heaven and earth, also are much higher than your ways?
10. “What do you think God should do?” “What has God decided including morality, judgment, salvation, and prayer?” “Can you tell God how you’ve decided to relate to Him and please Him, or how you will approach Him in your prayer, or what and when your prayers will be answered?” All these questions are answered and found in _____ books of the Bible fit perfectly together like a puzzle, and they point to Jesus as God’s solution to your human spiritual condition.

Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life! Without Me, NO ONE CAN GO TO THE FATHER.” (John 14:6 CEV)

11. Jesus being _____ to take the hand of God and the hand of man [you] and bring them [God and you] together, one would need to be heavenly and earthly as well as holy and human.

“For there is ONE GOD, and ONE MEDIATOR also between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a RANSOM for all.” (1 Timothy 2:5-6)

12. God needed who became an heavenly mediator must be equal to both parties became a man who personally provided the perfect sacrifice for your sin met the all requirements of God’s holy standards?

13. The **4 HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS of JESUS’ LIFE** in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John shared detailed testimonies about what?

14. The **THEOLOGICAL BOOKS** of Romans to Revelation explains _____ God was spiritually offering us a means to salvation through Christ and _____ His death on the cross satisfied the holiness, justice, and wrath of God against sin, while simultaneously [occurring, done at the same time] extending the merciful kindness, grace, and love of God to any sinner who is _____ to trust Him by faith.

“Christ had no sin, but God made Jesus become sin so that we in Christ could become right with God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21 NCV)

15. The book of Hebrews explains that Jesus Christ _____ fulfilled every one of God's requirements for a Savior, including:
- ☞ being a _____, blood sacrifice as punishment for sin. (Lev. 17:11)
 - ☞ being the _____ of God's law. (Hebrews 9:19-22)
 - ☞ being the _____ of a perfect covenant between us and God. (Hebrews 8:6),
 - ☞ and being an _____ priesthood that could forever carry out this [_____] covenant. (Hebrews 7:20-28)
16. **Y N NS:** If a person does not call on the name of the Lord, will Jesus saved him?
17. **Y N NS:** Will you take God's offering—forgiveness and eternal life as a free gift?
18. **Y N NS:** Have you heard deaf person's statement: "It is up to God who decide either heaven or hell!" Will you take that "It is up to God who decide for me: heaven or hell!"
19. With this in your mind, it is **IMPORTANT** to make sure you _____ to God's plan and you are saved God's way through Jesus, not on your own effort.
20. **T F:** Salvation comes from man, not the Lord.
21. **T F:** It is a natural transformation God brings about within someone's heart and life.
22. Inside your heart and your life transformed or changed by whom manufacture? INDIVIDUAL [someone]? CHURCH? GOD?
23. How?

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person [you] believes, _____ in righteousness, and with the mouth he [you] confesses, _____ in salvation."
(Romans 10:9-10)

24. What or who are you trusting in?

YOURSELF CHURCH YOUR GOODNESS YOUR UPBRING JESUS ALONE

25. Define what this “Eternity is too long to be wrong about your ultimate destiny’ means to you?
26. What we’ve just discussed is the **FIRST STEP** in fulfilling the purpose of this book “The Battle Plan for Prayer”. If you’ve repented and trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is the **FOUNDATION** for a _____.
27. **Y N NS:** God is your heavenly Father?
28. **Y N NS:** Are you His child?
29. **Y N NS:** Has His Holy Spirit entered your heart?
30. **Y N NS:** Has the blood of Jesus redeemed and cleansed you?
31. **Y N NS:** Have you now access and freedom to approach God your heavenly Father boldly in prayer?
32. **Y N NS:** Did you know Christ does for you, He opened up for you an amazing prayer communication line with God your Father?

The book of **FIRST JOHN** gives us **SEVEN KEY SALVATION INDICATORS** that help you determine if you truly know God or not. We challenge you to _____ yourself using the biblical guidelines. When you read through them [seven key salvation indicators], ask if these ‘_____ of true salvation’ are currently [presently—now] in your life?

Now you are in the court, you were put on trial for ‘being a Christian’, would the evidence of your life be overwhelming clear that you know Christ and that He knows you?

33. Genuine [true] salvation is a what? _____
34. **T F:** Your good works do remove sins.
35. If you are truly saved and are truly _____ by Christ, specific good works will start showing up as _____ or _____ of your salvation.
36. **THESE SEVEN THINGS ARE:**
- the **CAUSE** of salvation
 - the **FRUITS** of true salvation
 - the **ROOTS** of salvation

37. INDICATOR ONE: _____

- ☞ **Y N NS:** Have you been living a lifestyle of obedience toward God?
- **OBEDIENCE** to God? Or not?

38. INDICATOR TWO: _____

- ☞ Which one you do:
- a) openly confess that Jesus Christ is God's Son
 - b) believe Jesus to be simply a good teacher or prophet
 - A **CONFESSION** of Jesus as God's Son? Or not?

39. INDICATOR THREE: _____

- ☞ Which one: Are you
- a) a false believer will not confessing and turning away from sin
 - b) a true believer will confessing and turning away from sin
 - **REPENTANCE** of sin? Or not?

40. INDICATOR FOUR: _____

- ☞ **Y N NS:** Do you have God's Spirit pours out His love into your heart?
- ☞ **Y N NS:** Do you have a true love for other believers?
- Do you **SEE** a genuine love for other believers? Or not?

41. INDICATOR FIVE: _____

- ☞ **Y N NS:** Have you experience the clear discipline of your heavenly Father in your life?
- The **DISCIPLINE** of your Father? Or not?

42. INDICATOR SIX: _____

- ☞ **Y N NS:** Have you been experiencing these evidences [convict you when you sin, reveal what God's Word says, and pour true love, joy, and peace in and through you toward others] of the Holy Spirit in your life?
- The **EVIDENCE** of God's Spirit? Or not?

43. INDICATOR SEVEN: _____

- ☞ **Y N NS:** Do you trusting yourself—your own salvation?
- ☞ **Y N NS:** Do you trust your church who can saved your soul?
- ☞ **Y N NS:** Have you been trusting in JESUS ALONE for your salvation?
- A genuine **FAITH** in Jesus alone for salvation? Or not?