

Faith and Acceptance

Memory Verse: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

“You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ.”—[Steps to Christ, p. 51](#).

Suggested Reading: Steps to Christ, chapter 6, pp. 49-55. (At the bottom of this page)

1. Forgiveness and Peace

Sun, Aug 2

a. What is God’s wonderful promise of forgiveness and peace? 1 John 1:9.

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.

“You see that your life has been filled with selfishness and sin. You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain it?

“It is peace that you need—Heaven’s forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it, But God offers it to you as a gift, ‘without money and without price.’ Isaiah 55:1. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it.”—[Steps to Christ, p. 49](#).

b. What is another important promise that will transform the entire being into a new man in harmony with God? Ezekiel 36:26.

Ezekiel 36:26

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

“You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. Then believe that He does this **because He has promised**. This is the lesson which Jesus taught while He was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 49, 50. [Author’s italics.]

a. What did Jesus tell the paralytic at Bethesda to do, and what can we learn from this experience? John 5:1-9.

John 5:1-9

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. **2** Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. **3** In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. **4** For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. **5** And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. **6** When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? **7** The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. **8** Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. **9** And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

“Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, ‘Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.’ The sick man might have said, ‘Lord if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.’ But, no, he believed Christ’s word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he **willed** to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 50.

“Jesus had given him no assurance of divine help. The man might have stopped to doubt, and lost his one chance of healing. But he believed Christ’s word, and in acting upon it he received strength.

“Through the same faith we may receive spiritual healing. By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are vainly striving to obtain it. In despair they cry, ‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?’ Romans 7:24, margin. Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Saviour is bending over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, ‘Wilt thou be made whole?’ He bids you arise in health and peace.”—[The Desire of Ages, p. 203.](#)

b. What is promised to the sinner through Christ? 2 Chronicles 7:14; Hosea 14:4.

2 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Hosea 14:4

I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

“You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You **believe** that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You **will** to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it.

“Do not wait to **feel** that you are made whole, but say, ‘I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.’”—[Steps to Christ, p. 51. \[Author’s italics.\]](#)

a. When Jesus is accepted as Saviour, what happens to past sins? Romans 3:24, 25; 5:1, 9, 10.

Romans 3:24, 25

Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: **25** Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Romans 5:1

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Romans 5:9, 10

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. **10** For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

“‘What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.’ Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we **have** received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse.”—[Steps to Christ, p. 51](#). [*Author’s italics.*]

b. What standing does the believer have before God? Romans 8:1.

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

“While the Christian’s life will be characterized by humility, it should not be marked with sadness and self-depreciation. It is the privilege of everyone so to live that God will approve and bless him. It is not the will of our heavenly Father that we should be ever under condemnation and darkness. There is no evidence of true humility in going with the head bowed down and the heart filled with thoughts of self. We may go to Jesus and be cleansed, and stand before the law without shame and remorse.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 477.

“When we surrender ourselves wholly to God, and fully believe, the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. The conscience can be freed from condemnation. Through faith in His blood, all may be made perfect in Christ Jesus. . . . We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of

Christ, our Substitute. Ye are accepted in the Beloved.”—[Selected Messages, bk. 2, pp. 32, 33.](#)

c. What change should be recognized by all who have entered into this covenant relationship with God? 1 Peter 1:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20; Galatians 3:26.

1 Peter 1:18, 19

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; **19** But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? **20** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Galatians 3:26

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

“Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price. [1 Peter 1:18, 19 quoted.] Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son.”—[Steps to Christ, pp. 51, 52.](#)

4. Walking with Christ

Wed, Aug 5

a. How is the believer expected to conduct himself? Colossians 2:6.

Colossians 2:6

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

“Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, ‘I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him;’ and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, ‘As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.’ Colossians 2:6.

“Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may

claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity.”—[Steps to Christ, p. 52](#).

b. What is the provision for mistakes made in the learning process? 1 John 2:1, 2.

1 John 2:1, 2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

“Put away the suspicion that God’s promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul. None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon them the white robes of righteousness; He bids them live and not die.”—[Ibid., pp. 52, 53](#).

c. Explain how we are strengthened on this journey. 1 John 1:7; Galatians 5:16, 17, 25.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Galatians 5:16, 17

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Galatians 5:25

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

“Those who walk in wisdom’s ways are, even in tribulation, exceeding joyful; for He whom their soul loveth, walks, invisible, beside them. At each upward step

they discern more distinctly the touch of His hand; at every step brighter gleamings of glory from the Unseen fall upon their path; and their songs of praise, reaching ever a higher note, ascend to join the songs of angels before the throne.”
—[Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing](#), p. 140.

a. What are the conditions for acceptance by God? Isaiah 55:7; 44:22.

Isaiah 55:7

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Isaiah 44:22

I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

“God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another. His thoughts are thoughts of mercy, love, and tenderest compassion.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 53.
“Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him. Whoever will in faith accept God’s promises, will find pardon. The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul.”—[Patriarchs and Prophets](#), p. 726.

b. What is our heavenly Father’s true attitude toward all who have gone astray? Ezekiel 18:32; Luke 15:18-20.

Ezekiel 18:32

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.

Luke 15:18-20

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, **19** And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. **20** And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

“Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this. Do not give ear to the tempter, but say, ‘Jesus has died that I might live. He loves me, and wills not that I should perish. . . . The parable tells you how the wanderer will be received: [Luke 15:18–20 quoted].

“But even this parable, tender and touching as it is, comes short of expressing the infinite compassion of the heavenly Father. The Lord declares by His prophet, ‘I have loved thee with an everlasting love: **therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.**’ Jeremiah 31:3. While the sinner is yet far from the Father’s house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father’s heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father’s heart of love.”—[Steps to Christ, pp. 53, 54.](#) [Author’s italics.]

Personal Review Questions

Fri, Aug 7

1. What enters the soul whose sins are pardoned?
2. Why was the paralytic at Bethesda suddenly able to walk?
3. When we accept Christ as our Saviour, what promise is ours?
4. What is the secret of a victorious walk with Christ?
5. Describe the contrast between Satan’s malice and the Father’s redeeming love.

Suggested Reading: Steps to Christ, chapter 6, pp. 49-55.

Chapter 6—Faith and Acceptance

As your conscience has been quickened by the Holy Spirit, you have seen something of the evil of sin, of its power, its guilt, its woe; and you look upon it with abhorrence. You feel that sin has separated you from God, that you are in bondage to the power of evil. The more you struggle to escape, the more you realize your helplessness. Your motives are impure; your heart is unclean. You see that your life has been filled with selfishness and sin. You long to be forgiven, to be cleansed, to be set free. Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain it? (SC 49.1)

It is peace that you need—Heaven’s forgiveness and peace and love in the soul. Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot procure it, wisdom cannot attain to it; you can never hope, by your own efforts, to secure it. But God offers it to you as a gift, “without money and without price.” Isaiah 55:1. It is yours if you will but reach out your hand and grasp it. The Lord says, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they

shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isaiah 1:18. “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezekiel 36:26. **(SC 49.2)**

You have confessed your sins, and in heart put them away. You have resolved to give yourself to God. Now go to Him, and ask that He will wash away your sins and give you a new heart. Then believe that He does this because He has promised. This is the lesson which Jesus taught while He was on earth, that the gift which God promises us, we must believe we do receive, and it is ours. Jesus healed the people of their diseases when they had faith in His power; He helped them in the things which they could see, thus inspiring them with confidence in Him concerning things which they could not see—leading them to believe in His power to forgive sins. This He plainly stated in the healing of the man sick with palsy: “That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.” Matthew 9:6. So also John the evangelist says, speaking of the miracles of Christ, “These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” John 20:31. **(SC 49.3)**

From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.” John 5:8. The sick man might have said, “Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.” But, no, he believed Christ’s word, believed that he was made whole, and he made the effort at once; he willed to walk, and he did walk. He acted on the word of Christ, and God gave the power. He was made whole. **(SC 50.1)**

In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You believe that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You will to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise,—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it. **(SC 51.1)**

Do not wait to feel that you are made whole, but say, “I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.” **(SC 51.2)**

Jesus says, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” Mark 11:24. There is a condition to this promise—that we pray according to the will of God. But it is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. So we may ask for these blessings, and believe that we receive them, and thank God that we have received them. It is our privilege to go to Jesus and be cleansed, and to stand before the law without shame or remorse. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” Romans 8:1. **(SC 51.3)**

Henceforth you are not your own; you are bought with a price. “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; ... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Through this simple act of believing God, the Holy Spirit has begotten a new life in your heart. You are as a child born into the family of God, and He loves you as He loves His Son. **(SC 51.4)**

Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, “I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him;” and ask Him to give you His Spirit and keep you by His grace. As it is by giving yourself to God, and believing Him, that you become His child, so you are to live in Him. The apostle says, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him.” Colossians 2:6. **(SC 52.1)**

Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity. **(SC 52.2)**

Here is where thousands fail; they do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally, individually. They do not take God at His word. It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God’s promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul. None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in

Jesus, who died for them. He is waiting to strip them of their garments stained and polluted with sin, and to put upon them the white robes of righteousness; He bids them live and not die. **(SC 52.3)**

God does not deal with us as finite men deal with one another. His thoughts are thoughts of mercy, love, and tenderest compassion. He says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins." Isaiah 55:7; 44:22. **(SC 53.1)**

"I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." Ezekiel 18:32. Satan is ready to steal away the blessed assurances of God. He desires to take every glimmer of hope and every ray of light from the soul; but you must not permit him to do this. Do not give ear to the tempter, but say, "Jesus has died that I might live. He loves me, and wills not that I should perish. I have a compassionate heavenly Father; and although I have abused His love, though the blessings He has given me have been squandered, I will arise, and go to my Father, and say, 'I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired servants.'" The parable tells you how the wanderer will be received: "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Luke 15:18-20. **(SC 53.2)**

But even this parable, tender and touching as it is, comes short of expressing the infinite compassion of the heavenly Father. The Lord declares by His prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jeremiah 31:3. While the sinner is yet far from the Father's house, wasting his substance in a strange country, the Father's heart is yearning over him; and every longing awakened in the soul to return to God is but the tender pleading of His Spirit, wooing, entreating, drawing the wanderer to his Father's heart of love. **(SC 54.1)**

With the rich promises of the Bible before you, can you give place to doubt? Can you believe that when the poor sinner longs to return, longs to forsake his sins, the Lord sternly withholds him from coming to His feet in repentance? Away with such thoughts! Nothing can hurt your own soul more than to entertain such a conception of our heavenly Father. He hates sin, but He loves the sinner, and He gave Himself in the person of Christ, that all who would might be saved and have eternal blessedness in the kingdom of glory. What stronger or more tender

language could have been employed than He has chosen in which to express His love toward us? He declares, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.” Isaiah 49:15. **(SC 54.2)**

Look up, you that are doubting and trembling; for Jesus lives to make intercession for us. Thank God for the gift of His dear Son and pray that He may not have died for you in vain. The Spirit invites you today. Come with your whole heart to Jesus, and you may claim His blessing. **(SC 54.3)**

As you read the promises, remember they are the expression of unutterable love and pity. The great heart of Infinite Love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion. “We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Ephesians 1:7. Yes, only believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness. **(SC 55.1)**