

# 8 Explain the Way of Salvation

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Over 300 years ago, John Bunyan, a lay preacher and mender of kitchen pots and pans, wrote the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is the story of a man called Pilgrim who is burdened by a heavy load on his back. His sins trouble him. As Pilgrim begins to read a Book that has come into his hands, he learns that the city he lives in is doomed for destruction. He cries out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Though family and friends try to help him, his condition worsens. Then, a man named Evangelist appears, and he asks Pilgrim why he is so miserable. After he explains, Evangelist says, "If this is your condition, why are you standing still?"

Pilgrim replies, "I do not know where to go."

Evangelist tells Pilgrim how to escape the city, directing him to a narrow gate with a shining light off in the distance. Pilgrim starts to walk toward the gate. (See Matthew 7:13–14.)

We, too, meet people who need someone to show them the way to eternal life. In this lesson, you will learn how to present the important steps to salvation and give your own personal testimony. Included are points on overcoming difficulties.

## ***lesson outline***

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Present the Steps of Salvation

Share Your Testimony

Overcome Difficulties

## ***lesson objectives***

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When you finish this lesson, you should be able to:

1. List and explain the steps of salvation in Christ along with related Scripture passages.
2. Recognize the value of an effective personal testimony.
3. Apply scriptural methods and answers when helping those who have difficulty accepting the message of salvation.

## ***learning activities***

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1. Read the lesson in this independent-study textbook and do the exercises in the lesson development.
2. Memorize the five steps to salvation and the Scripture verses that accompany them.
3. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers carefully.

## ***key words***

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appendix

confronted

naive

colleague

fallacies

renounce

confirm

illustrious

## ***lesson development***

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### **PRESENT THE STEPS OF SALVATION**

**Objective 1.** *List and explain the steps of salvation in Christ along with related Scripture passages.*

It was midnight in a jail at Philippi in the district of Macedonia 1900 years ago when some strange things took place. The jailer had thrown two missionaries from the church of Antioch, Syria, into an inner prison cell. He treated them as if they were convicts of the worst type, fastening their feet between heavy blocks of wood. We read what happened in Acts 16:19–34.

These two prisoners had been terribly mistreated, insulted, and severely beaten. Now without enough clothes to cover their bleeding bodies, Paul and Silas were suffering too much pain to sleep. They started to pray. Victory entered their souls! They began singing hymns and worshipping God while other prisoners listened with wonder.

“Suddenly,” wrote Luke, who was in Philippi at the time, “there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose.” The jailer had been sound asleep. Startled by the strong earthquake and seeing its effects, he immediately thought that all the prisoners had escaped. He knew that as a Roman jailer he carried full responsibility for his prisoners and would have to pay with his life. Pulling out his sword, he was about to commit suicide.

Someone shouted to him to stop! It was Paul. “Don’t harm yourself!” he called. “We are all here!”

Picture the scene! The jailer quickly calls for blazing torches. He rushes in and falls in fear at the feet of Paul and Silas, crying, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” This was the question 2000 years ago and it is the question of men and women today who recognize their need of the Savior.

In this lesson, we will summarize the steps of salvation so that we may be able to give them clearly to others who do not know how to be saved.

## Application

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**1** Do you remember the story of Christine (Lesson 2) who accepted Jesus as her Savior and relayed the message to her dying father? You wrote the five steps of salvation through Christ in your notebook. The first step referred to Romans 3:23, which is also one of your *Fingertip Texts*. Without looking at your card, write the verse from memory.

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## Step 1: Acknowledge That You Are a Sinner—Romans 3:23

The answer Paul and Silas gave the jailer who asked how to be saved was, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” (Acts 16:31). To reinforce this simply-worded answer, “they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.” (Acts 16:32).

The jailer’s question tells us that he knew he was lost. He knew he needed to be saved. As we already studied in Lesson 5, the Holy Spirit convicts of sin. Those who are convicted can stifle the dealing of the Holy Spirit and continue to trust in their own good works, but if they do so, they will not be saved. Romans 3:23 says plainly that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

In Luke 18:9–14, Jesus gives an interesting parable of two men praying. The tax collector only cried out, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner” while the Pharisee recited his own good works. Jesus summed up the parable by saying, “I tell you that this man [the tax collector], rather than the other, went home justified before God.”

## Step 2: Recognize That God Did Something About It—John 3:16

Why did God do something about it? Man could have gone on in his sin and been eternally lost, but God did something about it. His reason was love: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).


By becoming a member of the human race, He identified himself with us. He suffered and died on the cross for the specific purpose of taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The gospel that we preach, teach, and talk about must center on these words of Paul: “Christ died for our sins” (1 Corinthians 15:3).

### ***Application***

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**2** List in your notebook the first two steps of salvation and write out the Scripture verses that go with them. Do this from memory.

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## Step 3: Receive Christ as Your Savior—Romans 6:23

It isn't enough to mentally recognize the fact that Christ died to save sinners. The Bible says that “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). A gift must be received and accepted by the one to whom it is offered.

Incredible as it may seem, history has recorded more than once the story of a man on death row who refused a pardon. Doesn't it seem almost unbelievable that a man would turn his head and purposely ignore a messenger who came with a paper declaring forgiveness from the governor or king? Yet it has happened, and the prisoner was executed because he wouldn't accept the gift of life.


Incredible as it may seem, people today refuse the offer of life God gives. We must each receive Jesus Christ as Savior, accepting the gift—God’s only Son. Thank God that “to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

### **Application**

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**3** Now list the three steps you have been given and the Scripture references for them. Do this from memory.

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### **Step 4: Confess Sin and Get Rid of It—1 John 1:9**

Sin is like a great burden, as Pilgrim described in the beginning of this lesson, but hiding it won’t help us get rid of it. We must confess our sin—admit that we have sinned—and renounce it. Sometimes we use the word *repentance*—making a complete turnabout from serving ourselves, the world, and the devil to serving the Lord.


What would you think of a prisoner condemned for murder who said he would accept his pardon from the governor, but he intended to go out and kill someone else? No doubt his pardon would be withdrawn immediately. If you were the man condemned and pardoned, your gratitude and thankfulness would help you turn from your wicked ways—especially if your release came through someone else’s death! Ours came through the death of Jesus Christ, and so complete is that forgiveness that the Bible says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

### **Application**

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**4** List Steps 1 to 4 with their Scripture references from memory.

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## Step 5: Confess and Believe That Jesus Is Savior and Lord—Romans 10:9–10

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. (Romans 10:9–10).

If salvation were only getting rid of the past, we would be left without direction to our lives, but we confess and believe; by faith we take Jesus as our Savior and *claim* Him as Lord of our lives. Jesus said, “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven” (Matthew 10:32). We aren’t ashamed of being part of God’s family. Giving Jesus His rightful place as Lord of our lives means also that we can rest completely in His saving grace and His power to keep us.

This true incident may serve as a helpful illustration: A tribesman with a heavy load of wood on his back trudged wearily along a mountain road in Taiwan many years ago. Along came a lumber truck. The driver stopped and offered the old man a ride. As he had never ridden in a vehicle before, the man was a bit reluctant. The driver, however, assured him of a safe ride to his village, so the old man climbed on to the back of the truck. After driving some kilometers over the bumpy road, the driver heard a loud pounding on the top of the cab. The man was shouting wildly for him to stop. “Tong be-tiâu! (Unbearable!)” he cried.

The driver then discovered that the old man was still carrying the load on his back, and the bumpy road was causing it to press down more heavily on him. He did not understand that he could lay his burden down and that the truck would carry his load as well as himself!

You may smile at this story and think how naive the old man was! Yet a person may be doing the same thing regarding the step of putting his or her trust in the Lord Jesus. In his letter to the believers, Jude closed with these words of praise: “To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy” (Jude 24). Jesus Christ is Lord!

## ***Application***

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**5** Now that you have studied all five steps, write them down from memory along with the references until you can do so twice without error.

**6** To get still further practice with this important part of our lesson, find a friend and ask him or her to listen while you explain these five steps. Use the Bible as you point out the Scriptures. Do this several times until you feel comfortable with the steps and the Scriptures.

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## **SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY**

**Objective 2.** *Recognize the value of an effective personal testimony.*

So far, we have studied mainly how to present salvation through steps given in God’s Word. This is of primary importance, for we read that Jesus and the apostles declared the truth of Scripture. Jesus did, however, include stories and incidents of undying human interest.

You have a story that you can tell with an accuracy and assurance with which no one else can tell it—the story of your own conversion. Your personal witness shares what Christ has done in your life, and as you give it, you can assure listeners that the Lord will do the same for them. It will also help them realize that you don’t think of yourself as being better than they, for you, too, needed to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ and continue to need His strength and help every day.



## **Application**

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**7** In your notebook write a list of things the Lord has done for you and what He means to you, for recall in sharing with others later.

**8** Read Psalm 66:16 and Psalm 77:10–11. What two things did the psalmists purpose to do?

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Brief testimonies of your own spiritual experiences with the Lord will confirm what the Word of God says. “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit,” declared Peter and the other apostles (Acts 5:32).

The three-way witness—what the Word of God says about salvation, what the Holy Spirit confirms, and what you give in personal testimony—will strengthen your work of sharing the good news.

The following testimony in soul-winning may help you:

Esther, a bashful girl in her teens, was taking her first trip alone on a train and felt very nervous about it. Her father helped her to her compartment and placed her suitcase on the rack above. As the train pulled out, they waved a fond good-bye.

Feeling self-conscious and insecure, Esther settled down in the seat, noticing that her companion, only a little older than she, looked hardened in the ways of the world. Esther wanted to relax and read her book, but she felt guilty because here was an opportunity to witness for her Lord and share her salvation experience. However, she was afraid that the girl would laugh at her, and she didn’t know how to begin.

Then, the girl herself opened the conversation. “Who was the man who saw you off at the station? Is he your father?”

“Yes!” replied Esther. She didn’t know what to say next, and she prayed desperately for the Lord to help her.

However, her companion spoke again, “It must be nice to have a father.”

“Oh, yes!” said Esther, still feeling shy and tongue-tied.

“I wish I had a father to take care of me,” continued the girl.

That did it! Realizing that God had provided the opening, Esther gained courage to proceed. “Oh, but you *do!*” she said warmly.

“No, my father died long ago,” said the girl, whose name was Hettie.

“I’m so sorry!” said Esther. She paused, then went on, “But you *do* have a father! There is a heavenly Father who loves you and cares for you more than any human father could!”

Sensing her companion’s interest, Esther went on to explain how God loved us enough to send His Son to die in our stead and how, through accepting His sacrifice for us, we can be born into the family of God. “All you need to do is believe on Him and receive Him as your Savior. Would you like to do this?” she asked.

“Oh yes, I would like to! I want to have God as my Father so I can go to heaven, but I still don’t understand what to do. I don’t feel sure about it.”


Esther wondered how to proceed. Then, the Holy Spirit brought something to her mind. “Hettie,” she said, “when I got on this train I had to have a ticket. I didn’t pay for it myself—my father paid for it. I just took it. Jesus is like this ticket. All you do is take Him and accept Him as your ticket to heaven, provided for you by your heavenly Father. Let’s pray together so that you can do it now!”

No longer self-conscious and shy, Esther led Hettie in a prayer for salvation, then encouraged her to pray, talking to God just as she would to a father. The rest of the trip they joyfully discussed salvation and what it means to be part of God’s family.

The girls exchanged addresses before Hettie left the train at her town so that they could keep in touch and Esther could send her further encouragement and teaching. Esther traveled on, rejoicing!

## Application

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- 9** An effective personal testimony
- a)** confirms what God's Word says about salvation.
  - b)** helps others see that salvation is for us today.
  - c)** strengthens your work of sharing the good news.
  - d)** can take the place of God's Word.
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## OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES

**Objective 3.** *Apply scriptural methods and answers when helping those who have difficulty accepting the message of salvation.*

In sharing the good news with people, try to be sensitive to their difficulties in accepting the message of salvation. Learn their viewpoints concerning the issues you discuss, taking time to listen to them. They may have serious objections, lame excuses, or perplexing questions. They may even want to argue, but of course you won't do it. Instead, you will try to understand them. Then, from your knowledge of Scripture and your personal experiences, give answers to the points they raise. Always look for ways to steer the conversation back to the five steps of salvation or a similar presentation of the basic plan of salvation.

The appendix in the back of the book gives further help on some specific difficulties. Armed with the authority of God's Word and the power of the Holy Spirit, you can overcome these and other difficulties in sharing the good news.

## **Application**

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Review the appendix and then answer questions 10 and 11. Write the answers in your notebook.

**10** An unsaved man tells you not to worry about him—he will make it to heaven somehow; after all, he’s been a good neighbor.

- a** How would you respond to him?
- b** Under which of the nine types listed in the appendix did you find Scriptures to support your responses?

**11** A woman tells you that this life offers too much—she can’t give up what she believes to be an illustrious future.

- a** How would you respond to her?
  - b** Under which of the nine types listed in the appendix did you find Scriptures to support your response?
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The following is an outstanding illustration of difficulties that have been overcome. Dr. Maynard Ketcham tells of an experience during his early ministry in India in which an argument was lost but eight men were won.

He and a national colleague, Abdul, were confronted by a demon-possessed woman. They prayed fervently and in the name of Jesus cast the demons out of her. She was delivered by the power of God! The Lord further confirmed the ministry of this national-missionary team by additional miracles of healing, and people were converted.

Opposition to these victories mounted, however. Pagan religious leaders in the area organized a public debate and invited an expert, skilled in argument, to come and challenge Abdul and Ketcham. Villagers excitedly gathered together to witness this confrontation. The pagan debater did what he could to discredit Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. Hour after hour, he ranted on in blasphemy.

Then, Abdul had his chance to speak. He jumped to his feet ready to point out the fallacies of his opponent’s religion and defend the Bible, but the missionary held him back and

whispered, “Don’t argue. It will be of no use, for these people’s minds are closed. Simply give your testimony of what Jesus means to you.”

Abdul shared his testimony with the crowd: “I, a son of a priest, grew up among you . . . proud, anti-Christian . . . and hating the name of Jesus. But then one day He came and changed me. Instead of hate, His love now fills my heart. You, too, can have His love and His peace.”

Maynard Ketcham then gave his testimony of how he came from America to India to share the good news of Jesus. “Abdul and I are brothers in Christ . . . our sins are forgiven . . . . If you confess your sins and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord, you, too, can be forgiven . . . and we all can be brothers . . . .” The two men then bowed low and left the gathering.

The mob shouted after them and mocked them: “You two have lost the argument. You are in no way a match for the debater!”

That evening, Abdul and Ketcham ate their meal disheartedly. They had lost. They prayed. Could the Lord still give them victory?

About midnight, a visitor came to see them. “I must talk to you. My heart is on fire! I must find peace or I cannot live out the night!”

It was Mukhtar, the pagan debater! The Holy Spirit had so convicted him of the hate in his heart that he had to go to Abdul and Ketcham. The two men gladly explained to him the way of salvation in Jesus. His heart was open to their message; he received Christ as Savior and was gloriously converted. One by one, seven other men, also convicted by the Spirit, crept through the night shadows to join them as they sat on a coconut log. They, too, heard the message and trusted in Jesus as their Savior.

Later, on the exact site of the debate, believers built a Pentecostal church. Mukhtar, the former pagan debater, became their pastor after his training at a Bible institute.

Yes, by resisting the temptation to fight back, Abdul and Ketcham had lost an argument—but they had won a glorious spiritual victory!

### Application

The following verses are for the benefit of the soul-winner who wants to be fully equipped to do God’s work:

**12**  *Fingertip Text*

<b>Title: God’s Inspired Word</b>	<b>Reference: 2 Timothy 3:16–17</b>
<b>Text: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.</b>	

**13** Read 2 Timothy 2:23–26. Would you say that Abdul and Ketcham in the story you just read followed these instructions?

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**14** What might have been the outcome if they had succeeded in “winning” the debate?

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**15** We trust that by now you have been able to give your witness to those whose names you wrote in your notebook after Lesson 2. If some have responded by expressing their difficulties in believing or accepting the salvation message, find their types in the appendix and learn the Scriptures that help them. Pray for the right opening or for the wisdom to make an opening for further discussion on spiritual things.



**self-test**

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**1** Write out the five steps of salvation and the Scripture verses that go with them in your notebook.

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false.

....**2** To be saved one must first recognize that one is lost.

....**3** God gave His Son for this world because He loved the world.

....**4** God's payment to those who believe is eternal life.

....**5** If we are to have God's gift, we must accept it.

SENTENCE COMPLETION. Complete the following sentences on the lines provided. For 6 through 9, choose the best answer of each two given in parentheses and write it in the blank.

**6** Whenever possible, give .....  
testimony. (your own/someone else's)

**7** The psalmist purposed to .....  
God's goodness (remember/forget)

**8** We should quote freely from .....  
when evangelizing. (good books/Scripture)

**9** All Scripture is inspired by .....  
(Prophets/God)

**10** Salvation not only takes care of the past, but the Lord has  
promised to save and to .....

SHORT ANSWER. Write the answer to the question on the lines provided.

**11** Give the “three-way witness” of personal evangelism.

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**12** Some people have difficulties or problems that stand between them and their accepting Christ. What would you suggest they do?

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FINGERTIP TEXT.

**13** From memory, write in your notebook or quote to someone else the *Fingertip Text* you learned. Include the title, reference, and text.



**answers to study questions**

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- 1 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- 9
  - a) confirms what God's Word says about salvation.
  - b) helps others to see that salvation is for us today.
  - c) strengthens your work of sharing the Good News.
- 2 Compare your answers to the steps given in the lesson.
- 3 Compare your answer to the steps given in the lesson.
- 10
  - a Your answer. You might tell him that we are not saved by our own efforts but by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8–9).
  - b Type 6.
- 4 Compare your answer to the steps given in the lesson.
- 11
  - a Your answer. You might ask her what the riches and fame of this world are worth in comparison to eternity without Christ (Mark 8:36).
  - b Type 3.
- 5 Compare your answer to the steps given in the lesson.
- 12 Without looking at your card, you should be able to quote all three parts of the *Fingertip Text*, 2 Timothy 3:16–17.
- 13 Yes.
- 6 No answer needed.
- 14 Your answer. I would say that their opponent would probably have been embarrassed and angry and would not come for salvation.
- 7 Your answer.
- 15 No answer needed.
- 8 Remember (recall) and tell (declare).

