



After

SALVATION

R. B. THIEME, JR.

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This book is edited from the lectures and unpublished notes of R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Scripture is quoted from the New American Standard Bible. Bracketed commentary reflects Bible class lectures (available from R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, Houston, Texas) or correlates the quotations with the topic at hand.

YOUR ETERNAL SALVATION

THE DECISION TO ACCEPT CHRIST AS SAVIOR is the single most important decision you will ever make. Jesus Christ laid down His life for you, and when you accept His sacrifice on your behalf, eternal life is yours—and you “have it abundantly” (John 10:10*b*). Concerning those who believe in Him, Jesus says,

And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. (John 10:28)

In your moment of faith, you are brought into the family of God and forever united with His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:16–17; Galatians 3:26; 4:7). Your position “in Christ” means you share Christ’s destiny, His righteousness, and His exalted position in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:3–6).

From then on, you have a personal relationship with God that will never change and an eternal future in heaven that will never be canceled.

But how does this moment of faith alone in Christ alone extend into your life on earth? What does your salvation mean for today, and the day after that, and the day after that? God does not carry you off to heaven as soon as you believe, so He must have a purpose for your postsalvation life.

ONCE SAVED, WHAT'S NEXT?

God keeps believers alive on earth so they can get to know Him personally through His Word. True contentment and wisdom come as a result of learning about Him, loving and serving Him, and living in such a way that glorifies Him. His desire is for you to

know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:19*b*)

Reaching this “fullness” requires spiritual growth. What is true in the physical life is true in the spiritual life—we are designed to start out as babies, move toward adolescence, and eventually become mature adults. No one can start out knowing and loving God. But the process of spiritual growth is designed to get you there (and beyond—to blessings of maturity that stagger the imagination, 1 Corinthians 2:9).

Along the way, God graciously provides all the resources, opportunities, instructions, and encouragement you need to advance beyond childhood and keep moving forward in His plan. As you grow to maturity,

God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
(Philippians 4:19b)

If you have recently trusted in Christ for salvation, consider this booklet an introduction, a quick primer, for your life after salvation. Spiritual growth begins with the basics of Bible doctrine; basic doctrines are “the pure milk of the word” with which to nourish the believer’s soul (1 Peter 2:2).

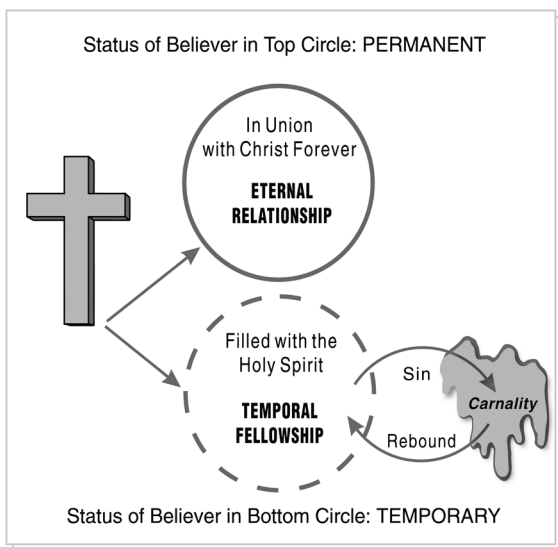
To start, one of the most essential things to understand is *sin*—what personal sin is, how it affects your walk with God, and how to recover from it.

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

Contrary to a common misconception, believers do not stop sinning after salvation. Whatever you think, say, or do that goes against the perfect standards of God is a personal sin. This includes anything from fear and pride to lying, hatred, adultery, and murder. Everyone has a sin nature, an inherent corruption, which is the source of all temptation to sin. You’ve had this sin nature since birth, and it comes with you into the postsalvation

life. It is part of the mortal body and will be with you until you depart for heaven.

Choosing to commit sin breaks your fellowship with God. But didn't I just say your relationship with God cannot be changed? That's right, it cannot. But there is a difference between your eternal relationship with God and temporal fellowship with God. I'll illustrate this with a diagram.



TOP AND BOTTOM CIRCLES

The two circles illustrate the Christian experience. Both connect to the cross, because both begin with faith in Christ's salvation work. The top circle represents your eternal relationship with God.

You can never get out of this top circle, just like you can never be let go from the hand of God (Psalm 37:24). This is your permanent position “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3–4).

The bottom circle represents your *temporal fellowship* with God. (Temporal relates to time, to your daily life on earth rather than eternity.) Another word for the bottom circle is *spirituality*, because it involves the filling of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b). When you are inside the bottom circle, in fellowship with God, you are “spiritual” and the Holy Spirit fills your soul with His enabling power. But when you sin, you step outside the bottom circle. You lose the filling of the Spirit and are “carnal”—your soul is under the control of the sin nature.

No matter how often you sin and leave the bottom circle, there is a way to get back in again. Our faithful heavenly Father is always ready to receive His children back into fellowship with Him, and He does this through a simple recovery procedure: the private, direct confession of sins to Him.

Your sins were judged and paid for at the cross, and on this solid basis God makes the promise of forgiveness:

If we [believers in Christ] confess [name, cite] our sins [to the Father], He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9; cf. 1:7)

I call this recovery procedure “rebound,” because

naming your sins to God the Father immediately bounces you back into fellowship, back into the bottom circle.¹

Notice—there is no penance, no feeling sorry for sins, no begging God for forgiveness or promising to do better. There is also no telling your sins to someone else. Simply by rebounding, by citing your sins directly to God the Father, your sins are forgiven. You are cleansed from all wrongdoing, the filling of the Holy Spirit is restored, and you can once again “walk by [means of] the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16).

Don’t presume, though, that forgiveness is a free pass for bad behavior. Rebound is not a license to sin but to *serve*. The confession of sin restores you to a position where you can live the spiritual life and honor God. It is no wonder, then, that this grace procedure is so vital.

Staying in the bottom circle is the primary objective after salvation. In the bottom circle you have access to the influence and mentorship of God the Holy Spirit, giving you the supernatural dynamics for executing the Christian life. In the bottom circle you can understand and apply spiritual truths, produce divine good, witness for Christ, pray effectively, and grow spiritually “in the grace and knowledge of our Lord” (2 Peter 3:18).

What happens to believers who neglect rebound, remain out of fellowship, and follow their own

1. Read more on this subject in *Rebound & Keep Moving!* (1993) by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

path? They will never lose their position as a child of God—but they are stuck in Christian infancy, navigating through life with the same “futility of . . . mind” as an unbeliever (Ephesians 4:17).

LEARNING TO ADVANCE

So at any given moment you are either inside or outside the bottom circle, either filled with the Spirit or not. The better you understand sin and its repercussions and the more often you apply the rebound technique, the longer you will be able to maintain the filling of the Spirit. But if you remain in ignorance, stuck in your old patterns of thinking, the Holy Spirit’s function in your life will be sporadic, even non-existent.

This brings us to the next essential element for spiritual growth: a new way of thinking. Even if you are the most intelligent, educated, and talented person in the room (humanly speaking), none of that will help you advance spiritually. Romans 12:2 explains the kind of cognition required:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Under the power of the Holy Spirit, you are to renovate your soul—to be “transformed by the renewing of your mind”—with the true principles

of God. Former attitudes and beliefs will not cut it; God's superior thoughts, objectives, and viewpoint are the new standard.

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the
LORD.

“For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts.”
(Isaiah 55:8–9)

By replacing your previous way of thinking with God's way of thinking, you grow up spiritually and “prove what the will of God is” (Romans 12:2). And where do you find the thinking and will of God? During this age, God reveals Himself strictly in the pages of Scripture. The Bible holds the absolute truths of God, which reveal His perfect character and standards, His infinite wisdom, and His complete plan for human history (Psalms 119:160; 139:17; 1 Corinthians 2:16).

Keep in mind, however, that understanding God takes more than simply reading the Bible for yourself. God designed His Word and the spiritual life of this age to be taught through the gift of pastor-teacher (Ephesians 3:7–8; 4:11b–13). The prepared pastor is guided by the Holy Spirit to study and communicate the truths revealed in Scripture, and the believer who listens to that instruction is aided by the Holy Spirit to understand the message and store it in the soul for application (John 14:26; 16:13).

Learn these biblical truths, study and restudy them, and make them the motivation for your decisions and actions (Colossians 1:9–10). As stated in 2 Timothy 2:15,

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Transformation occurs in your inner person, the soul, when you persist with Bible doctrine. Your previous *human viewpoint* toward life is gradually replaced with *divine viewpoint*, or God's viewpoint. Since the Lord becomes the focus of your life, you cease to depend upon other people or circumstances for love, happiness, or security. You begin to evaluate yourself objectively with His standards, to accurately apply His wisdom to your experiences, and to solve problems with biblical solutions. Frustrations and fears are eased by trusting God's plan over your own. You no longer worry about what to do or where to go. Rather, you simply rest and follow in faith as God opens and closes doors for you (Proverbs 3:5–6).²

By now it should be evident that the emphasis in the spiritual life is not on rituals or emotional experience, nor is it on law-keeping or extreme self-denial. The emphasis is on *thinking*—thinking with the realm of divine wisdom revealed in the

2. Read more in *Mental Attitude Dynamics* (2000) and *The Faith-Rest Life* (2004) by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

Bible, communicated by the pastor-teacher, and made understandable by the Holy Spirit.

SERVING GOD

What about Christian works, doing good deeds? These, too, come as a result of growing and advancing in the spiritual life. With the right thinking and motivation, you gain the capacity to perform activities that are more visible—like witnessing, giving, and aiding the needy—in ways that truly serve God (2 Timothy 2:21).

It is not serving God, however, if your works amount to *your* efforts, performed under *your* strength, to impress God or others. Such works hold no credit with God, since they are produced apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Can you see why residing in the bottom circle is so important? In fellowship with God, you are not controlled by sin or false motivations and your strength comes from God Himself (2 Corinthians 9:8; Ephesians 6:6–7).

To serve God in the right way is to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord . . . strengthened with all power [through the Holy Spirit], according to His glorious might” (Colossians 1:10*a*, 11*a*). This worthy walk brings you to the place where you can

please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10*b*)

“Every good work” describes divine good, the Christian deeds performed under God’s power (the filling of the Holy Spirit) in the bottom circle. These deeds receive recognition and reward from God in heaven—they are eternal and incorruptible, the “gold, silver, precious stones” of 1 Corinthians 3:12–15.

IN THE DAYS AHEAD

If you are a believer in Christ, know that your existence has great meaning, purpose, and definition. God sustains you, day by day, with everything you need to become a mature believer who glorifies Him in time and eternity. And in the process, you have the privilege of realizing the unique plan God designed specifically for you, a plan that includes inner peace, stability, and blessings given “far more abundantly beyond all that [you can] ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). What I have presented here is only a brief introduction to the magnitude of God’s grace plan.

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ [and you have], keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. (Colossians 3:1–2)

To “keep seeking the things above” means to pursue, to examine, to endeavor to obtain Bible doctrine. Reaching spiritual maturity demands

positive volition—an active desire to learn about God, and the willingness, self-discipline, and humility to submit to learning the truth. Organize your days around the top priority, the consistent intake of God’s Word. As with any kind of training, you begin with simple, basic precepts, and if you keep at it, you can progress to more advanced categories of knowledge. Although a passage taught might not interest you or pertain to your life at the time, all pieces of information will eventually fall into place to form the whole realm of God’s Word in your soul.

If (and when) you fail along the way, or even if you hit rock bottom, God promises, “I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU” (Hebrews 13:5*b*; cf. Joshua 1:5*b*). Rebound is there for you to get back up and keep moving. By utilizing rebound and the blessings of divine grace, you are freed to “lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles,” so you can keep advancing in the postsalvation plan of God (Hebrews 12:1).

BIBLE DOCTRINE RESOURCES

Throughout his fifty-three years in the pulpit, Pastor Thieme sought to present the Scriptures with clarity and precision. His doctrinal teachings—using innovative vocabulary, categorical outlines, and practical illustrations—concentrate on the mechanics of how to live the Christian life. Whether you are new to Christianity or just looking for solid biblical instruction, these books and sermons will equip you in your daily spiritual advance.

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The Plan of God

The Trinity

Slave Market of Sin

The Barrier

Rebound & Keep Moving!

Isolation of Sin

The Faith-Rest Life

God the Holy Spirit vs. The Sin Nature

Mental Attitude Dynamics

Heathenism

Divine Guidance

Prayer

Witnessing

The Prodigal Son

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God's plan for human history)

Protocol Plan of God (223 lessons on God's
perfect way of life designed for believers in
Christ)

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R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries is a grace ministry and operates entirely on voluntary contributions. When gratitude for the Word of God motivates a believer to give, he has the privilege of contributing to the dissemination of Bible doctrine.

DOCTRINAL BIBLE STUDIES

Bible doctrine, the body of teaching drawn from a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, is the standard for spiritual truth. Bible study provides spiritual nourishment for the Christian (Matt. 4:4).

The importance of Bible doctrine cannot be overemphasized (Ps. 138:2). God commands the Christian to be inwardly transformed (Rom. 12:2). This transformation requires a daily renewing of the mind through learning and applying the Word of God (2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23).

For many years doctrinal Bible classes taught by R. B. Thieme, Jr., have provided spiritual food for his congregation. Publications and audio and video recordings of his teachings are available without charge or obligation. For ordering and information, please write or call the Ministries or visit the website. A *Doctrinal Bible Studies Catalogue* will be provided upon request.

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THE AUTHOR

ROBERT B. THIEME, JR. (1918–2009) remains a significant voice of Christianity throughout the world. His diligent, expository teaching is based on the original languages of Scripture in light of the historical context in which the Bible was written. His innovative systems of vocabulary, illustrations, and biblical categories clearly communicate the infallible truths of God’s Word. Thieme recorded more than eleven thousand hours of sermons and published more than one hundred books covering much of the Bible.

Thieme graduated from the University of Arizona (Phi Beta Kappa) and Dallas Theological Seminary (summa cum laude). His seminary studies were interrupted by World War II military service during which he rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the United States Army Air Corps. After completion of his graduate work in 1950, he became pastor of Berachah Church in Houston, Texas. His extensive training in Greek, Hebrew, theology, history, and textual criticism provided the foundation for his demanding professional life of studying and teaching the Word of God. Thieme retired as pastor of Berachah Church after fifty-three years of faithful service.

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