

WORKING OUT YOUR SALVATION

Philippians 2:12-13 ... "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do his good pleasure."

Your born-again experience begins at the moment you surrender your own will and allow God to have his way in your life. God's primary will for you is that you accept Christ's sacrifice on the cross as the payment for your sins. That is the moment of salvation for you. But it does not end at that moment, as we read in today's passage from a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Philippi.

Today's verse is not about you working to earn salvation, for which Christ already paid the highest cost (his crucifixion). There is nothing you can do to earn, buy, or barter for it. You simply accept it as a gift from God. Some believers and churches mistakenly assume this verse means that you must work to be saved, which is not correct. Rather, Paul is telling the Philippi believers (and us) that once we are saved we should serve God according to his plan for our lives.

To "work out your own salvation," you enjoy the blessings God has picked out just for you, you discover the excitement of serving God in the assignment he designed for you before you were born, and you look with enthusiasm to an eternity in heaven with Jesus.

You might think in terms of replacing "work out" with "honor." The "fear and trembling" part of that instruction, refers to the glory you give to God for what he does in and through you as you serve him. We could paraphrase this verse as: "Since you have proven yourself obedient to Christ, I instruct you to honor him and your salvation with service to him, so that God will be glorified in everything you do."

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