

## Our Way or God's Way

The truth of God is different than the truth of man. The Almighty God, the author of love but also the righteous Judge, sees us as we are and deals with us in truth. In our natural condition, we see things as we think they ought to be. However, "there is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

There are many truths in the word of God that address our standing before Him. God tells us that our position with Him is either one way or another. These things are black and white; there is no *in between* or *gray* area. For example, every person fits into either the left column or the right column below. Please check the Scripture references to see whether these things are true (see also II Timothy 3:16-17 and Hebrews 4:12).

<b>A Person Is Either</b>	<b>Or</b>
Saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7)	Condemned in sin (Romans 3:23; 5:16-18)
A child of God (Romans 8:16-17; Galatians 3:26)	A child of wrath (Ephesians 2:3; 5:6)
In the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9; II Timothy 1:14)	In the flesh (Romans 7:5; 8:5-8)
Forgiven of sin/justified in Christ (Romans 3:23-26; 4:25; 5:9; Colossians 1:13-14)	Guilty in sin (Romans 3:10-11, 23)
Considered righteous in Christ (Romans 4:5; 10:10; II Corinthians 5:21)	Unrighteous (Romans 3:10; I Corinthians 6:9-11; II Corinthians 6:14)
Alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-6)	Dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1-3)
Given eternal life (Romans 6:23; Titus 1:1-2; 3:5-7; John 3:36)	Facing spiritual death/eternal damnation (Romans 6:23; II Thessalonians 1:6-9; Revelation 20:11-15)
A citizen of heaven (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:4-6)	Is of the world (Ephesians 2:1-3)
Of the day (I Thessalonians 5:4-8)	Of the night (I Thessalonians 5:4-8)
Light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:12; I Thessalonians 5:5)	Of darkness (Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 1:13; I Thessalonians 5:4-5)
Blessed with all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3)	Cursed (Galatians 3:10-13; Matthew 25:41)
At peace with God (Romans 5:1)	An enemy of God (Romans 5:10)
With hope (Romans 5:1-5; 15:13; Titus 2:11-14; 3:5-7)	Without hope (Ephesians 2:12; I Thessalonians 4:13)
Reconciled with God (Romans 5:10-11; II Corinthians 5:18)	Is separated from God (Romans 3:23; Ephesians 2:12)
A new creature or creation (II Corinthians 5:17)	A natural man (I Corinthians 2:14; Colossians 3:9-10)
Free from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:17-18; Galatians 5:1)	A slave to sin (Romans 6:6-7, 17-18)
Occupied by two spirits—the Spirit of God and the spirit of man (Romans 7: 14-25; 8:11, 16; I Corinthians 2:11-14)	Has one spirit—the spirit of man (I Corinthians 2:11, 14)

The right column above is the natural condition of every person. No amount of effort or good works can enable us to attain the conditions of the first column (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Romans 4:5). We can only be in the left column by believing the gospel, or good news, of salvation. That is, a person must truly believe, from the heart, that he or she is a sinner and that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead (Romans 3:23; 5:8-11; 10:9-10; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 1:13-14).

Everything a believer has is the result of that work that Christ accomplished at the cross (Ephesians 1:18-23). God sees every believer as a person in Christ, who is perfect and righteous. Furthermore, God considers us to be members of Christ's body (I Corinthians 12:12-13, 27).

Now, if we believe the gospel of salvation, we have a choice about how to live. The choice is to live either according to God's way (some examples are in first column in the next table), or according to our own way (second column).

<b>A Believer Should</b>	<b>Instead Of</b>
Live/walk by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16-17, 22-25)	According to the flesh (Galatians 3:3; 5:19-21)
Think on things above (Colossians 3:1-3; Philippians 4:8)	On things of the world (Titus 2:11-12; Philippians 3:18-19)
Be instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:12-13; II Timothy 2:21)	Instruments of unrighteousness (Romans 6:12-13)
Live by faith (Galatians 2:20; 3:11)	By works (Galatians 3:1-3)
Be found in Christ (Philippians 3:8-9)	In sin (Ephesians 5:11-13; I Timothy 5:24)
Be obedient/faithful to God (Romans 6:16-18; Philippians 2:12)	Disobedient (Ephesians 5:6; Titus 1:16)
Seek God's will (Colossians 1:9-10; 3:1-3; 4:12; I Thessalonians 4:3-8)	Personal desires (I Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:21)
Live for Christ (Colossians 3:12-17, 23)	For self (Ephesians 4:17-19)
Flee from sin (Colossians 3:5-9; Ephesians 5:3-4; I Corinthians 6:18-20; 15:34)	Continuing in sin (Romans 6:1-2; I Timothy 5:20)
Be transformed by the renewing of his mind (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:20-24)	Conforming to the world (Romans 12:1-2)
Walk as a child of light (Ephesians 5:8; Romans 13:12-14; II Corinthians 6:14)	In darkness (Ephesians 5:11; Romans 13:12-14)
Walk as a wise man (Ephesians 5:15)	As an unwise man (Ephesians 5:15)
Be filled with the Spirit/sober minded (Ephesians 5:18; 6:18; I Corinthians 15:34)	Being drunk with wine/dissipated (Ephesians 5:18; Titus 1:6)
Be humble (Philippians 2:3-8; Ephesians 4:1-2; Proverbs 16:19; I Peter 5:6-7)	Proud (I Corinthians 13:4; II Timothy 3:1-5; Proverbs 16:19)
Be giving (Philippians 4:15-17; Romans 16:1-2)	Selfish (I Corinthians 13:4-7; Philippians 1:15-17; 2:3)
Be edifying (Ephesians 4:29)	Divisive/deceptive (Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 4:29; 5:6; I Timothy 6:3-5)
Stand firm or fast in the Lord (Ephesians 6:10-17; I Corinthians 15:58; Philippians 1:27; 4:1)	Retreating into sin or the world (I Corinthians 10:6-12)
Do all things for Christ (Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 6:7)	Trying to please men (Colossians 3:23; Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 6:7)
Pursue righteousness (I Timothy 6:11; II Timothy 2:22)	Unrighteousness (I Corinthians 13:6)
Speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15, 25)	Lie (Ephesians 4:14, 25; Colossians 3:9)
Be kind to others (Ephesians 4:32; I Thessalonians 5:15; Titus 3:1-2, 8)	Vindictive or hateful (Romans 12:17-21; Ephesians 4:31; I Thessalonians 5:15; Titus 3:3)

Ideally, a believer should live according to the first column—this is God's will for us. However, as indicated in the first table, a believer has two spirits or natures that are in conflict with each other. The Spirit of God is perfect, whereas the spirit of man is sinful. Consequently, no one besides Jesus Christ has lived a sinless life. We find ourselves bouncing back and forth between the columns. The Apostle Paul described his own personal struggle in Romans 7:14-25 as an example to all believers.

Although every believer will continue to sin as long as he or she lives on this earth, it should be our desire to live according to the left column in a manner that is worthy of our salvation (Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 1:9-12). We should be thankful to God that, despite sinning, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit and cannot lose our salvation in Christ (Ephesians 1:13-14; Romans 8:1).

However, if we live according to the second column, we are living in disobedience and are effectively separating ourselves from fellowship with God and cannot experience His peace. If we find ourselves living according to sin, or someone points out that we are doing so, there is a way for us to recover from the situation and restore fellowship with God. We must admit our sinfulness, humble ourselves before God with a repentant heart (II Corinthians 7:9-10; II Timothy 2:25-26), depend on the strength of God to overcome the power of sin (Ephesians 6:10-17), and desire to do His will. We need to remind ourselves who we are in Christ (first table) and how God wants us to live (second table).

Believers should remember that we were bought with a price—the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 6:20; Romans 3:23-26). Our response to that supreme sacrifice should be thanksgiving to God and Christ for this ultimate demonstration of love, and to live our lives according to God's will. Only then can we truly know the peace of God and be able to withstand the sinful temptations that abound (Philippians 4:6-9; I Corinthians 10:13).