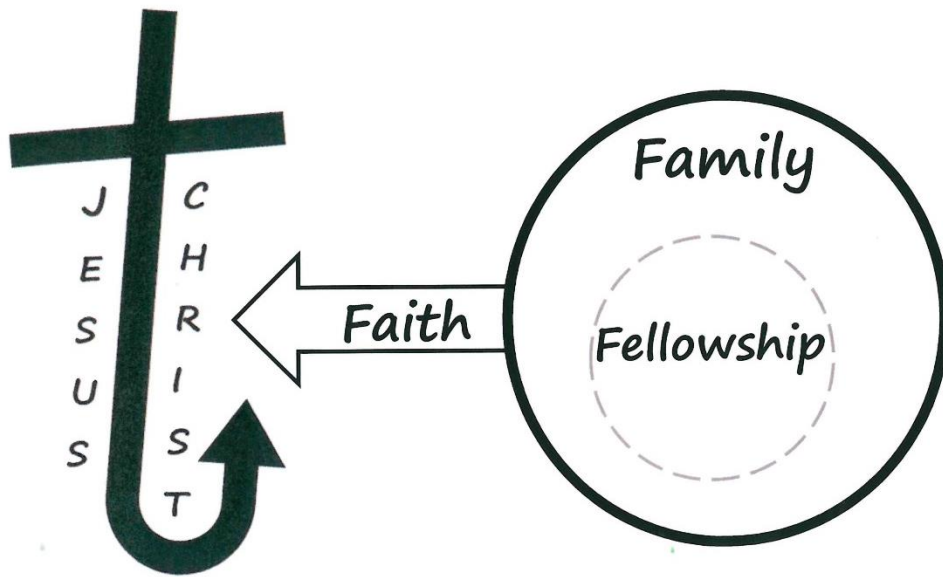


The Two Circles



May I ask you a question?

Would you like to know for *certain* that you will go to heaven when you die? Does the Bible teach that we may *know* that we have eternal life when we believe in Jesus?

Many say we must have good works in our life to *prove* that we are eternally secure. Others say if we don't have good works then we were *never saved*. The formula usually takes one of the following forms:

Faith + Works = Salvation

Faith = Salvation + Works

Could both be wrong?

Does the Bible actually teach that we can know we have eternal life?

The Two Circles is an illustration that will help you sort through these formulas and understand what the Bible says about *salvation*!

The Bible is clear that mankind has a problem.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23

and

“The wages of sin is death...” Romans 6:23

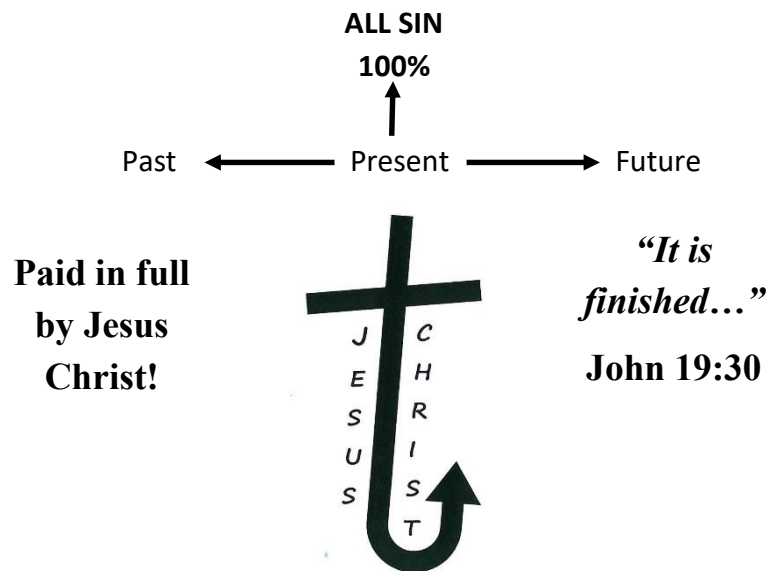
Because we could not do anything to fix the problem God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to die for our sins.

God loves us so much that He provided His Son Jesus to pay the sin debt that we owed. His death on the cross was the complete, final payment for sin.

Not just *past sin*, or *present sin*, but ***all sin*** for ***all time***.

His resurrection proved that He was who He said He was and that He did what He said He was going to do!

The following illustrates the truth of Jesus’ death on the cross for all sin:



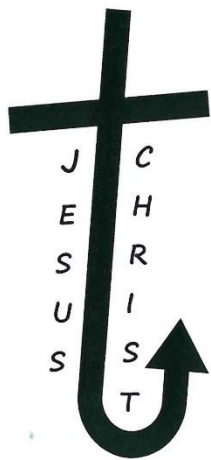
One of the clearest verses in the Bible is John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Faith in Jesus = Eternal Life

Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection God can now offer eternal life to everyone who will simply believe in Jesus. Believing is not a work that we do but is simply receiving the gift that God offers.

We must not trust in ourselves, our works, or any other thing or person. We must have faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone!



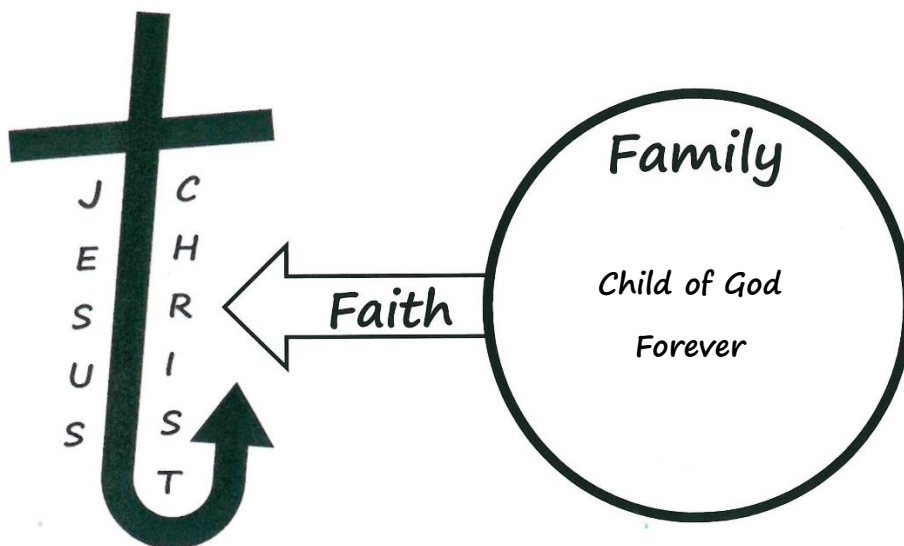
Faith must always have an object. It is not how much faith I have, but who is the object of my faith! Jesus, because He is God, is the only One who can save us. He must be the only object of our faith.

The Bible says that we become God's child when we believe in Jesus.

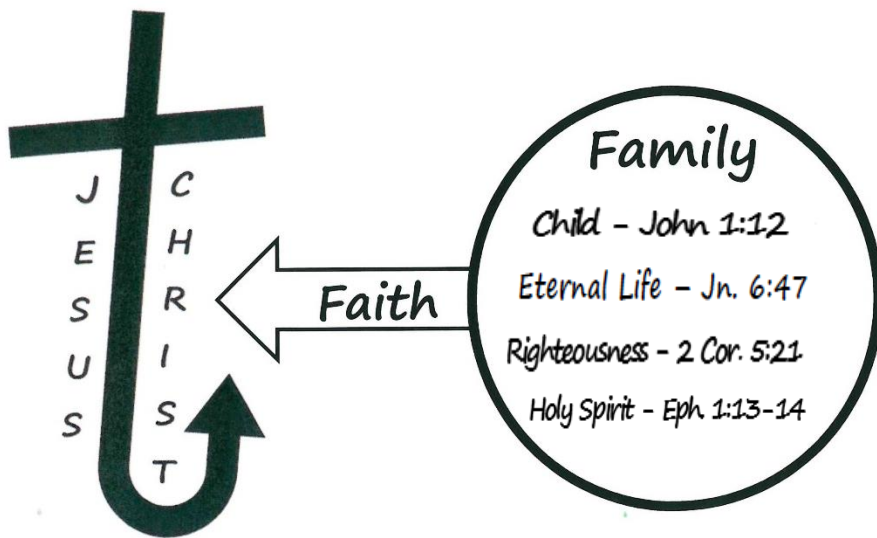
But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

John 1:12

We illustrate by drawing a large circle which we will call Family. This is an eternal relationship!



Once we become God's child, He will never disown us or cast us out of His family (John 10:28-29).



Notice some of the benefits of becoming a member of God's family:

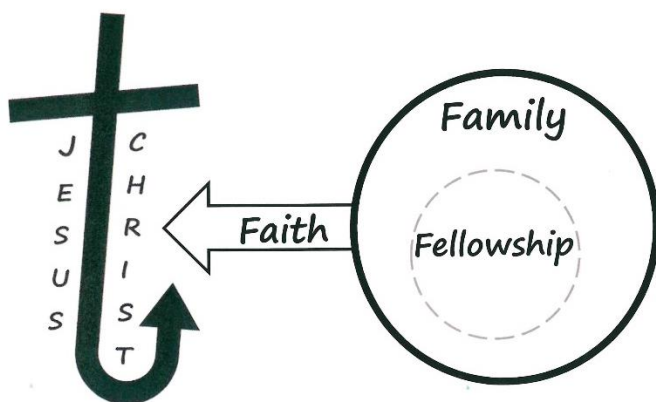
Eternal life - Life that never ends! Once you have it, you have it forever!

Righteousness - God credits Jesus' perfection to you! God no longer sees your sin but instead sees you in His Son.

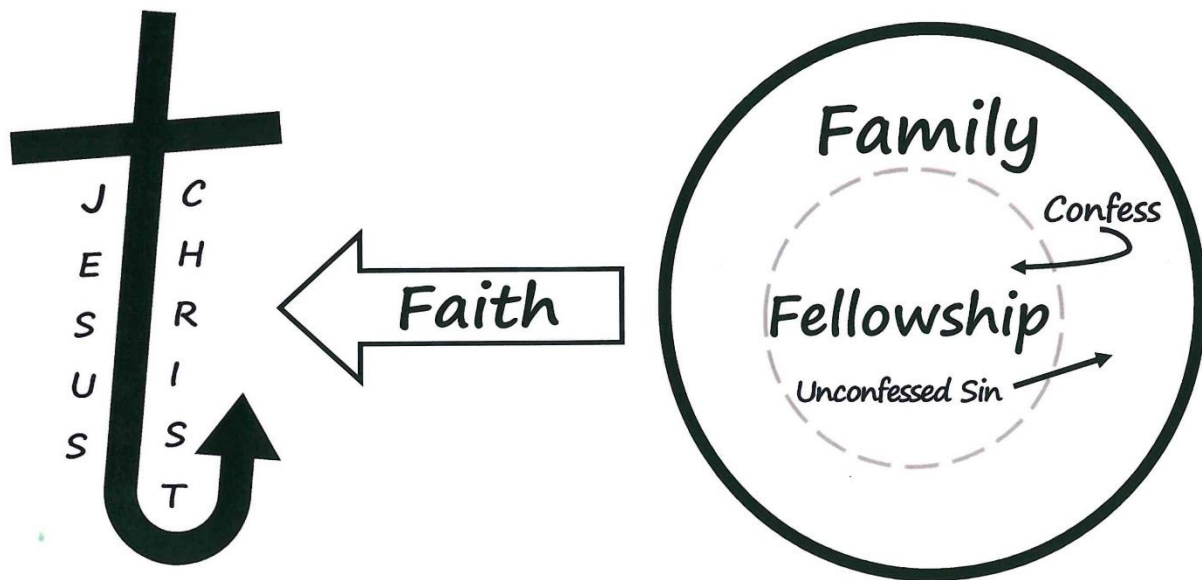
The Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit comes to live in us the moment we believe; not only that, He seals us so that our future life with Christ is made certain.

But what about all the commands in the Bible to obey and serve God? If eternal life is truly a gift then *why not live as I please?* Or *what happens when I sin?*

This is where the second circle helps us understand the **fellowship** part of our life in the family.



Just as a baby grows in a natural family we also have the privilege of growing in God's family. When we are in **fellowship** with God we put ourselves in position to grow! We are born into the family by faith *alone* in Jesus Christ alone. We walk in fellowship as we learn to *obey* God and faithfully trust His promises.



Sin in your life will not cause God to kick you out of His family. If Jesus paid for all your sin and offered you eternal life as a gift, how could sin ever separate you from Him? However if you continue in sin and do not confess it, you will lose your fellowship with God. 1 John 1:9 is a wonderful promise,

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Unconfessed sin may cause you to lose *fellowship* with God and the joy of your salvation but *you can never lose eternal life!*

Once we have believed in Jesus and have the Holy Spirit living in us, He gives us the power to live the life of fellowship.

Galatians 5:16 promises that if we **walk by the Spirit** we will not carry out the desires of our flesh (old sinful nature).

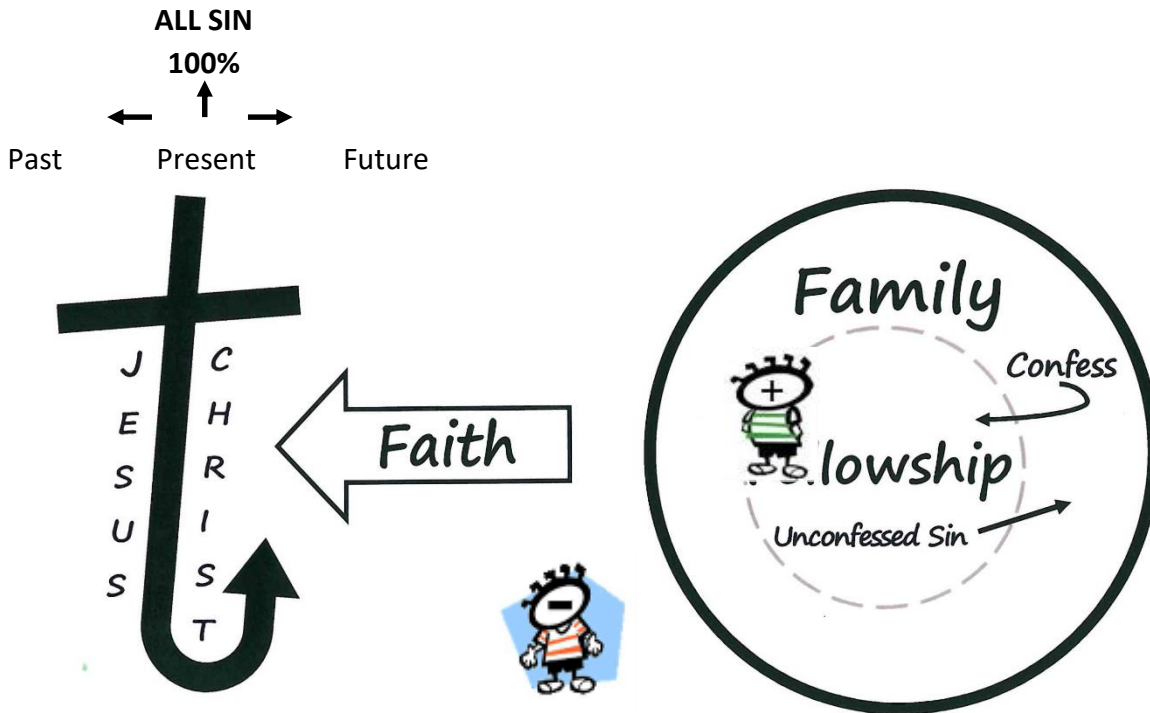
One of the ways we learn to walk properly is by learning God’s Word. Peter says,

“Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that you may grow in respect to salvation.” 1 Peter 2:2

Learning God’s word, learning to walk by the Spirit, learning to abide in Christ and experience fellowship with Him are just some of the ways we grow up to maturity.

Remember, we are in a family relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that will never end. When we grow and serve Him, He promises us eternal rewards for being faithful.

Look once more at *The Two Circles* illustration.



Which person are you in the illustration? There are only two choices.

Outside the Family of God and separated from Him and His provision for your sin...

In the Family of God because you have believed in Jesus Christ and Him alone for your eternal salvation...

Jesus makes you this promise in John 6:47

“He that believes in Me has eternal life.”

If you believe in Jesus Christ and Him alone for eternal life, on the authority of God’s word you are saved and saved forever!

To answer our original question: good works are important in our Christian walk toward maturity but only *faith alone in Jesus Christ alone* is necessary for eternal life!

We can now rewrite the formulas Biblically:

Faith alone = Salvation (Justification, eternal life & family relationship)

Faith + Works = Fellowship (Sanctification, maturity & eternal rewards)

For more details and Scripture references see [*The Two Circles*](#).

Dedicated to Dr. James V. (Nap) Clark who faithfully shared Christ with this illustration throughout his life.