



Salvation from Our Dark Side: A Biblical Perspective

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There are many obstacles to success in our career, but one of the greatest obstacles to attaining significant professional achievement is our own evil nature. How we view and understand the world, how we relate to people, how we manage our desires, and how we live our lives everyday can propel us forward only if all that we are and do is genuinely mature. Most of the time, however, our human nature is not as dependable as we would like it to be, and thus it drags us down so that we attain little more than regret whenever we fail to deal with it properly.

In terms of professional development, there are many philosophies that offer salvation from human shortcomings and harmful lifestyles; however, not all of them deliver what they promise. Therefore, I earnestly advise that every human being investigate as many ideologies as possible so that they can find one that is worthy of their complete confidence.

In this short essay, I would like to describe one of the many different options that people may want to consider, which has worked very well, generation after generation, in countries around the world. Since this information is not freely available to everyone in all parts of the world today, I would like to present a simple explanation of the Bible's path to professional growth and maturity in simple English.

The Definition and Process of Salvation

According to the Bible, salvation is an experience that God initiates by invading our life with new ideas and inner promptings that make us deeply aware of

1. God's existence,
2. our corrupt human nature and all of its dangerous preferences,
3. our worthiness of eternal incineration in Hell, separated from God and His people, because of our willful rebellion against His ultimate authority over all of His creation,
4. the impossibility of escaping our situation through anything but God's gracious intervention in our life, and
5. a strange new desire to know God and surrender to His vastly superior care.

Through divinely orchestrated circumstances, God will bring trouble into our life to break our pride and foolishness. He will reach out to us through people and media to make us aware of His existence and His amazing plans for our life. And He will persuade us to surrender ourselves to Him through prayer (like the example below), and then through baptism, expressed by immersion in water to represent the death of our old self and the rebirth of our new. The receipt of salvation is accomplished by simply believing that He exists and that what He says about himself, about us, and about the world is truly accurate and reliable.

Here is a sample prayer that people might typically pray when they decide to follow God.

Dear God: Please forgive my ignorance of You, my disinterest in You, and my rebellion against You. I have been a sinful person since birth, but I know that You exist, that You love me, and that You sent Jesus to be crucified in order to pay the full punishment for my sin instead of me. I invite You to fill me, reform me, and become my Lord so that I can follow Your wonderful plans for my life. In Jesus' name,¹ Amen

¹ Prayers to God must end with "in Jesus' name" (or something similar) since it is only by Jesus' sacrifice for us that we are made righteous and acceptable to God. In Japanese terms, we sign our prayer with Jesus' *hanko* (name seal) rather than our own since it is the only seal that is righteous enough to be acceptable to a pure and holy God.



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Evidence of Salvation

After we respond in faith and surrender to God's inner and outer promptings, the following things will likely occur, which demonstrate authentic life-transforming faith.

- A growing new hunger to know God and His ways,
- A growing new love for God and powerful new desires to thank, praise, and worship Him,
- A growing new interest in the Bible, along with the capacity to understand it,
- A growing new interest in righteous living, along with the capacity to live it,
- A growing new love for others, regardless of how difficult and unlovable they may be,
- A growing new desire to know and befriend other believers, and to fellowship with them,
- And increasingly beautiful transformations of our interests, motives, lifestyle, and personality to form a new identity that is far more healthy and valuable than our previous one.

Results of Salvation

After we experience genuine salvation from our former self and its justly deserving punishment, we enjoy eternal favor and intimacy with God, who will now make all things—past, present, and future—work for our good as He transforms us into new creations that better reflect God's original intentions for us.