

Common Salvation Fallacies

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Many people believe the message of the Gospel is that “**Christ died for you**” and that we need to “**accept Jesus**” as our “**personal savior**” by praying “**the Sinner’s Prayer**” so we might “**receive Jesus**” by “**asking him into our hearts.**”

Unfortunately, none of that is the Gospel, nor the plan of salvation, nor is any of it scriptural.

Let’s examine each phrase.

1. “Christ died for you”

You won’t find that in the New Testament. Instead, what you **do** find is, **Christ died for us**.

Romans 6:8 “But God demonstrates his own love for **us** in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for **us**.”

Romans 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the **ungodly**.

1Corinthians 15:3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for **our sins** according to the Scriptures,

Christ died for the Church collectively!

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of **the church of God, which he bought with his own blood**.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her**

Perhaps a better way to say it would be, “Christ died for all who will believe in him—and you can be included.”

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2. “Personal savior”

No place is Jesus ever described as your personal savior. *Jesus is the savior of the Church.*

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife as **Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.**

He is *not* your “personal savior.”

At an Awana Leader Conference (August 30, 2009), Dr. Stephen R. Lewis, Ph.D., President, Rocky Mountain Bible College and Seminary concurred with this assessment in describing this as Existentialism that has crept into our modern theology.

It's not about you, it's about Jesus. Jesus came to establish his church. He died for His Church, His bride, His body. He is the Savior of His Church.

3. “The Sinner’s Prayer” — Praying for forgiveness of sins to receive salvation

No one in the New Testament ever prayed to receive salvation. *You don't **pray** to obtain salvation!*

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ **for the forgiveness of your sins.** And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I believe the concept of the sinner's prayer was developed to fill in the gap or emptiness which results from removing the scriptural practice of baptism from the plan of salvation. God knew we as people need to *do* something at or near the point of our conversion in order to anchor the event in our reality. God established baptism. Man established the sinner's prayer.

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4. “Receive Jesus”

This must originate from the phrase “...all who received him...” in John 1:12. It is completely misunderstood. It has been given undue importance in the plan of salvation, almost as if to say, “Jesus is coming into me.” However, the meaning is clarified in the phrase that follows it.

John 1:12 Yet to all who **received him, to those who believed in his name**, he gave **the right to become** children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

Salvation is not granted at “receiving Jesus,” or at believing in his name, but only the right to become children of God. No one is ever instructed to ‘receive Jesus.’ The ones who did “receive him” were not saved by that receiving, but were given the right to become children of God.

You believe in Jesus. You receive the Holy Spirit. You receive salvation and eternal life. You “receive Jesus as Lord” (Colossians 2:6), that is, you accept his Lordship, but you don’t “receive Jesus.”

5. “Ask Jesus into your heart”

I can find no scriptural source for this.

You believe in your heart:

Romans 10:9-10 9 That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and **believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

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The Holy Spirit lives in you — Jesus does not.

Romans 8:11 And if **the Spirit of him** who raised Jesus from the dead **is living in you**, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies **through his Spirit, who lives in you.**

1Corinthians 6:19 Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit**, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

Personal Relationship

In more recent years, the idea of having a “personal relationship” with Jesus has become popular. I find no justification for it except as a human construct to help some understand how they might live a Christian life.

Some have carried the idea so far that if they believe you don't have what they consider to be a proper personal relationship with Jesus, or don't ever hear you talking about your personal relationship with Jesus, they doubt your salvation.

This makes salvation entirely subjective.