

ascension, but agreeing with the Bible alone is insufficient for obtaining salvation. Having had emotional or supernatural experiences are also inadequate. By an act of your will, you receive Jesus with His full orbred redemption by faith and that solely is enough!

**Utilizing a car picture to represent your life, which convertible best depicts your current spiritual situation?**

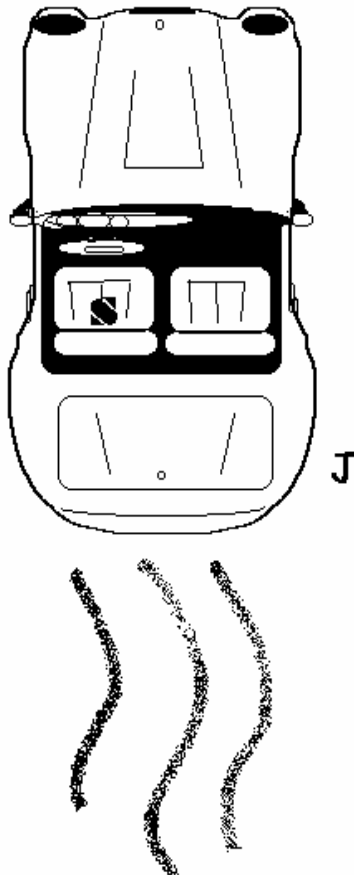



Diagram A

*The Self-Driven life*

**S** = Self is in the driver's seat.

**J** = Jesus is outside the life and the person is headed in a negative direction, towards a true hell.

 = With the car representing the person's life and the tail winds representing their fluctuating interests, (which in this case are directed by self), the results are often accidents, dissatisfaction, discord, restless frustration and assiduous lack of fulfillment.

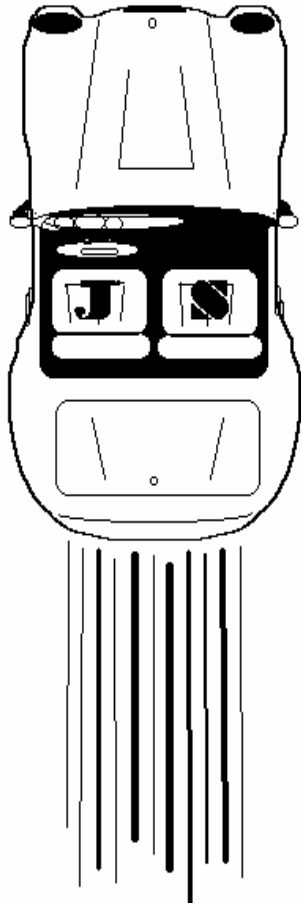


Diagram B

## The Christ-driven Life

∨ = Jesus is in the life and in control of its direction.

∫ = Self is yielding to Jesus and being kindly chauffeured in a positive direction, towards a real and majestic place called Heaven.



= With the car representing the person's life and the tail winds representing their life interests, which in this case are directed by Jesus Christ, the results are always lasting peace, order, full satisfaction and safe harmony with God's perfect plan.

**With these two convertibles representing two kinds of lives driven in diametrically opposite directions, which car would you like to have representing your life?**

## **4** Steps into a Relationship with God

***ADMIT IT AND QUIT IT, BELIEVE HIM AND RECEIVE HIM***

1. **ADMIT** you've done wrong and are in spiritual need.
2. **REPENT** and be willing to turn from your sin.
3. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save you.
4. **RECEIVE** through prayer, Jesus Christ into your life.



***Right Now, Receive Christ! Then You Can  
Know God's Boundless Love And  
Experience His Fruitful Covenant.***

What would prevent you? Don't come to Him merely for a peace, joy and a better life on earth. It's about knowing Him and avoiding Hell. Do you say you are a good person? Why should God, the Just Judge of the universe, allow you into His Holy Heaven? Have you ever broken the Ten Commandments? Have you ever told one lie? Well, what would that make you? Have you ever stolen one thing? The Bible says, "*You shall not steal.*" If you feel guilty when you hear all this, why do you think that is? Could it be because you are guilty? God gave us our conscience so we would know when we break His Holy Law. The guilt we feel when we do something wrong tells us that we need to turn away from sin to Jesus (repent). Have you ever once lusted after someone? If so, Jesus said you are an adulterer at heart. Have you ever been angry with anyone? That would make you a murderer at heart. The passing of lots of time, many good deeds and more learning won't erase that sin or gain you entrance into Heaven. Many think God will let them into heaven because He is good, but because God is good He must judge the guilty. Jesus mercifully paid the penalty for your sins on the Cross so you wouldn't have to suffer the coming wrath. So call out to Jesus in repentance now!

**"For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"**

[Romans 10:13].

Would you pray a suggested prayer something like this...

***Dear Lord Jesus,***

***I know I am a sinner, but I desire a covenant relationship with You. I believe You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for hurting You. Right now, in the best way I know, I turn from my sins and by faith, open the door of my heart to receive You. I invite You to take over the driver's seat of my life. Keep me, use me, and with Your love, change me into what You want me to be. Thank You for saving me!  
Amen.***

Go ahead and voice it to Him now, if this expresses your sincere desire!  
Jesus Christ will come in and save you, just as He promised.

Remember that God is more concerned with your heart attitude than with your exact wording, so although we must come on His terms, we can voice this invitation in our own words. **Warning:** to make no decision is a decision, and once someone has heard this Message without giving response, his or her heart will immediately become harder.

**Welcome into God's family!  
The angels are throwing a righteous party  
because of you!**

## **How To Have Covenant Assurance That Jesus Is In Your Heart**

Now, did you mean it when you asked Jesus in? According to His promise in Revelation 3:20, Jesus said He would invade your life with His divine love. The Bible says in Hebrews 13:8 that, "**Jesus Christ is the same yesterday today and forever.**" Has He ever misled anyone? No! So, on what authority do you have assurance that the Lord has answered your prayer? (The trustworthiness of God's character and His Holy Word). Praise God! Your name is logged in the Lamb's book of life. Just thank God that you are born from above and Jesus will never leave you (Hebrews 13:5). By thanking Him, you demonstrate your faith. This new birth is real—the most wonderful thing that could ever happen to you! Based on His promise you now have an eternal covenant with God!

## **His Word Promises Age-abiding Life To All Who Come To Jesus**

God is NOT religious at all and He DOESN'T play favorites! "**The witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he**

who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:11-13).

Remember that your salvation has everything to do with fact and nothing to do with feelings. God cares about your feelings and wants to hear about them, but feelings of closeness to God, may fluctuate or oscillate. Emotions are fickle, they come and go, but your eternal covenant is set. No matter what happens, Jesus is there for you!

## What Happened When You Received Jesus?

1. **Christ came into your life (Revelation 3:20, Colossians 1:27)**
2. **All your sins were forgiven (Colossians 1:14)**
3. **You became a full fledged child of God (John 1:12)**
4. **You received eternal Life (John 5:24)**
5. **You began the most thrilling adventure for which God designed you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).**

### If He's Not Lord Of All, He's Not Lord At All!

Each new day is an E-X-C-I-T-I-N-G venture when Jesus is the C.E.D.M. (Chief Executive Decision Maker).

In the world there are countless ways people try to categorize others. They say, "Ah, he's a computer nerd, He's a jock, she's a flirt, or she's a clothes horse," etc. But God, according to His Word, only has three categories for people. Earlier you were presented car diagram A, representing the **NATURAL MAN'S LIFE**, (the one who has not received Jesus). "**A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised**" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

And you remember checking out diagram B, representing the **SPIRITUAL MAN'S LIFE**, (the one who is moment by moment directed by Jesus, obeying Him as Lord). "**He who is spiritual appraises all things... We have the mind of Christ**" (1 Corinthians 2:15,16).

Now, check out the **CARNAL MAN'S LIFE** in diagram C, (this depicts the life of the defeated Christian). This person has received Jesus, but they are attempting to live the Christian life in their own strength. Believe me, this is the person you don't want to become! This person has enough of the world in them to feel unhappy in the Kingdom, but they also have enough of the Kingdom in them to feel unhappy in the world. They don't feel like they fit in anywhere. They are lukewarm and spiritually cross-eyed, with one eye looking to the world to meet their needs and the other eye on God to meet their needs. With one foot in the Church and the other in the world, they are totally miserable inside! Backsliding is no fun at all.

***"Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly--mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?"*** (1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NIV).

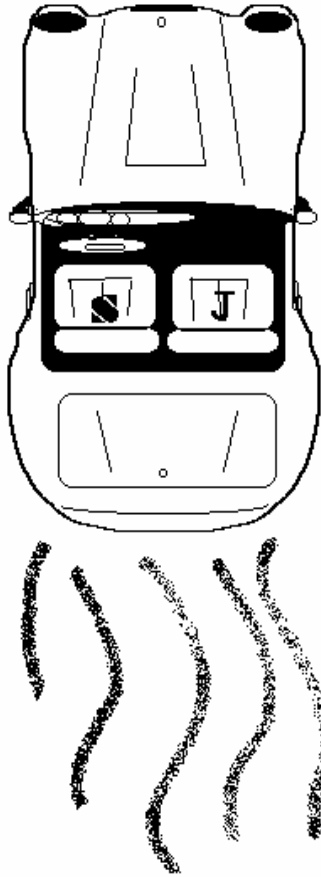



Diagram C

## The Self-Driven Life

- S = Self is in the driver's seat.
- J = Jesus is riding shotgun and not allowed to take the wheel, nor trusted to direct the life.
-  = With the car representing the person's life and the tailwinds representing their fluctuating interests, which in this case are directed by self, the results are often horrible accidents, dissatisfaction, discord, restless frustration and assiduous lack of fulfillment.

**Here Are The Problems That Mark The Self-driven Life:**

Legalistic attitudes, impure thoughts, jealousy, guilt, worry, discouragement, critical spirit, frustrations, aimlessness, fears, ignorance of their spiritual inheritance, unbelief, disobedience to authorities, poor prayer life, zero desire for Bible study, pride, loss of love for God, the Church and the irreligious.

Similar to the lifestyle of the unregenerate (the lost), flesh-sowing or mixed sowing in Christians can produce these negative traits, as well. The Bible says, **“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life”** (Galatians 6:7,8).

## Rewards Of The Jesus-driven Life:

### ***Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness, Goodness.***

Pure sowing is great! You are a contagious Christian with infectious faith (you enthusiastically introduce others to Jesus)! Your life is Christ-centered, you're empowered for service, you pray effectively, you have spiritual understanding and insight regarding the Bible, you rest in trusting God and you willingly obey divine and delegated authority.

We've really got to watch what we allow in our eye and ear gates. You remember the computer-adage: *Garbage in, garbage out!* To the degree that these characteristics listed above are evident in your life, will be in direct correlation to your degree of spiritual maturity and how you put your trust in the Lord with every detail of your life.

You must choose to follow Christ daily. You're either having a going-forward-day spiritually or a going-backward-day spiritually depending on your choice. No in-between! But, if you'll trust God's Word, diligently sow to the Spirit, and not allow the worldly or impious party-ers to distract you (negatively influence you away from Jesus), then you'll never backslide in your faith. Sowing to the Spirit edifies you with pure intake that's nourishing!

## How To Enjoy Your New Life To The Max...

*It's imperative you proceed FORWARD with Jesus spiritually, not lagging behind Him or running on ahead of Him. “Go forward, and march around the city” (Joshua 6:7).*

### **GO:**

- F** Fellowship with growing Christians as often as possible, especially with those who participate with you in a solid church (Hebrews 10:24,25).
- O** Obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit moment by moment, fully drawing on His strength (John 14:21).
- R** Read God's Word daily (Acts 17:11). Begin with the Gospel of John.
- W** Witness to the lost with patience and respect, (be an audio/visual witness—in word and deed), to win them to Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:19, John 15:8).
- A** Avoid sin at all costs and those places where you are most susceptible to temptation (2 Timothy 2:22).
- R** Remember to serve and build up Christians, to prepare them for evangelizing the world (1 Corinthians 16:14-16).
- D** Dialogue with the Father daily, getting real with Him in prayer. (John 15:7).

*Anywhere with You, Lord, provided it is forward.*

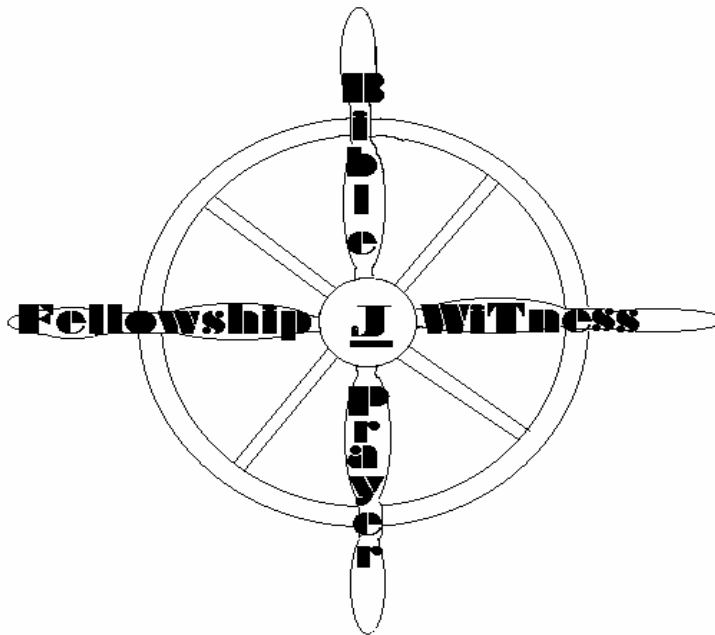
David Livingstone

*The Holy Spirit is enlivening the Church to produce a force in the earth. While some may think circumstances call for retreat, we only know how to blow the charge. The battle is hot. The global situation is less than favorable. But the Spirit of God is commanding us to go forward. Victory is inevitable.*

David Shibley

## **No Sloppy Agape**

The founder of the Navigators, Dawson Trotman, said that every Christ-centered believer needs at least four of these disciplines to live a strong and balanced life. He used the mariner's wheel of a ship to illustrate this, having Jesus at the hub of course. Bible reading and prayer relate to our vertical relationship with God (hearing and venting). Then fellowship and witnessing, ideally from under the covering of a healthy local church, relate to the horizontal ministries we have to our fellow man (helping the saved and unsaved). I too have found that if my love starts to lag, then these are the four disciplines or areas of relationship I want to check out first. Beloved, simply inquire of the Lord, "In which area have I been negligent?" That's "my check-up from the neck up." Now, some Christians seem to be more "vertical" with a strong lifestyle of worship and others seem to be more "horizontal" with a lifestyle of proclamation. But Jesus was balanced in all areas, as well as being balanced with the fruit and gifts of the Spirit.



## **TEMPTATION AND TRIALS**

As a result of growing spiritually as a Christian, you're going to experience what the Bible calls trials.

**"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" [1 Peter 1:6-7].**

Again, there will be times in your Christian walk when you will not feel the presence of God. But don't sweat it! Sanctification also has nothing to do with feelings and everything to do with fact (facts in His Word)! Our Christian walk should N-E-V-E-R be based on feelings or emotional experiences; it should always be based on faith in what the Word has said (read Hebrews 11). Of course, be encouraged to enjoy the feelings when they are there, but it is so important to learn what the Lord is trying to teach us through the trials He allows to come our way.

**READ: JAMES 1:1-4, HEBREWS 12 AND 1 PETER 4:12**

### **LEAD ME NOT INTO TEMPTATION**

Now that you're serving the Lord, Satan is ticked. You have become a threat to his kingdom of darkness. He will try his best to draw you away from Jesus by tempting you to disobey God's Word. It is not a sin to be tempted, for even Jesus was tempted (Luke 4). It only becomes sin when we give in to that temptation. But God will never let a temptation become so strong that we can't handle it.

## **The formula for dealing with Satan's temptations is easy to remember as the "3'R's."**

- 1. REALIZE...**  
WHO'S TEMPTING YOU (IT'S THAT WIMP, SATAN).
- 2. RESIST...**  
THE DEVIL—HE WILL HIT THE ROAD LIKE A WOUNDED DUCK.
- 3. REJOICE...**  
THE VICTORY IS YOURS IN JESUS CHRIST!

**READ: MATTHEW 13:22, 26:41, ROMANS 6:12; 8:35 & EPHESIANS 6:11-17**

*Just submit to God's authority and resist that dweeb, the devil.*

*"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" [1 Corinthians 10:13].*

### **WHAT ABOUT THOSE GRAY AREAS?**

I recently heard a new Christian ask, “Hey, what do Christians do for fun anyway, and how do you know if it’s right?” I replied, “Man, I’m glad you asked... Real Christians have more fun than anyone! It’s because of the Holy Spirit. What’s more, when you’re born again, you gain so many loving friends in the church, friends that have come from such a wide variety of backgrounds and they always want to share with you something from their experience. And God delights in using all this to give you abundant life! He can utilize all these experiences in the Body of Christ to broaden the saints. Instead of having just one pet-hobby (that might have previously been your “idol” in some old worldly click. You can now enjoy many new exciting adventures—yes, righteous fun, in fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Jesus.

Though we don’t live for pleasure, we take great pleasure in serving the Lord and He takes great pleasure in blessing us, so we in turn can be a blessing to others!

**“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore”** (Psalm 16:11). As we grow spiritually, we will learn to enjoy God more and live a truly balanced life. The Lord gives each one of us different personal convictions regarding certain gray areas. Therefore, we always want to be sensitive not to become a stumbling block to other believers. We also need to walk in the Spirit so we don’t over-step the bounds that God gives us, each one individually. Some try to exercise freedoms that God has given to other Christians around them, without first inquiring directly with God themselves and then they get into trouble. Now, if you run into a pleasurable “gray area” that you’re not quite sure about, you simply need to pray, seek out godly counsel, and then ask yourself:

- **Does it build you up spiritually?**
- **Do you have an uneasy conscience about it? (if so, don’t try to rationalize it)**
- **Does it stimulate spiritual hunger in you, or will it decrease your spiritual appetite?**
- **Would your participation in it place you in temptation’s way?**
- **Would this activity project an appearance of evil, retarding your witness?**
- **Would it trouble a weaker brother or cause them to fall?**
- **Could it bring you under its power?**

Personally, I’m not against movies in general, but I know you would agree that we Americans see too many movies. Watching TV in and of itself, is also not sin, but watching too much is, and watching certain things on TV is. Too much TV will literally decrease your spiritual hunger and make you lukewarm. Many times it’s like filling up on appetizers. It’s like when you were a kid and you’d arrive home to find your mom cooking a nutritious meal, but you were so hungry that you just couldn’t wait. You sort of scarfed down anything in sight. You start munching on snack after snack as she cooked. There went the Cheetos... then the Twinkies... then the Ding Dongs are sucked down... then something would fall on the floor and you’d snatch it up and gobble it down. You were so hungry you’d

crunch on the dog's dry kibbles and end up cleaning up his bowl. But when the meal was finally set on the table, you just weren't hungry any more. You spoiled your appetite on some major junk food. And that's how it is for many Christians. They're junk food junkies, hooked on the appetizers of life, so to speak.

**The Apostle Paul said, "You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'—but not everything is helpful. You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'—but not everything is beneficial" (1 Corinthians 10:23). Look what other translations say, "...but not everything is constructive," "...but not all things edify," "...but not all things build up," and "not all things promote the development of godly character."**

## **Spiritual Breathing Keeps You Living**

It's easy, exhale the bad, then inhale the good. After you've gotten the bad out by telling on yourself candidly to God, you can appropriate His forgiveness, His cleansing, and His power by faith.

Dr. Bill Bright refers to this exercise as "spiritual breathing"—breathing out the destructive, the pollution, and then breathing in the constructive, the positive and God's cleansing. Accepting restoration in this way will enable you to walk in unbroken harmony with Jesus Christ and in consistent victory over sin. The devil likes to get a wedge in to cut off your fellowship. Though our union isn't broken, our communion is when we don't confess our sins to God. We may fall down on the ship, but that doesn't mean we fell off the ship—get back up!

Do everything you can to hate and avoid sin. But if you disobey the Lord in the future, this is the way to be immediately and fully restored into fellowship with your heavenly Father again. He loves you and desires your fellowship. He wants you to be quick to identify it for what it is and run to Him with it (I'm talkin' about all the wrong-doins').

Just call it what it is, "SIN," and take the responsibility when you hurt Him. Yes, it's sin that cuts us off from communing with the Lord, but repentance, (or turning from sin to God) reunites this friendship and vital access into His presence. This is what the Bible means when it speaks of "confessing our sins." To confess means to agree with God that sin is sin. Sin is to have no place in your life as a Christian. Like many, there might be times you feel like a hypocrite or like hiding it from God. But that will only complicate matters and rob you personally. But when you turn from your sins to God, He readily forgives you and immediately reactivates your fellowship with Himself. And you need no go-between in this other than Jesus.

## **Keep Short Accounts With God**

The devil is called the accuser of the brethren, because that's what he does. When we sin (miss the mark), we shouldn't ever try to sweep the facts under the rug. It's best to come into the light quickly no matter how much condemnation we feel. God knows it all anyway, so run to Him and come clean with it instantly, confessing your sins thoroughly, being sorry for them. Trust that God, through Christ, is faithful and just to forgive us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). He'll not only forgive you, He'll cleanse you from all unright-living.

## By God's Power, Change.

Remember that the only things that God wants to remove from your life are the things that will destroy it. That's because He loves you! Therefore it's important that we cooperate and turn from our sin (sin—the things the Bible says separate us from God).

We all need to limit our time with our old friends who like to sin. **"Do not be misled: bad company corrupts good character. Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning"** [1 Corinthians 15:33-34]. We are to positively influence those people to go toward Christ, not allowing them, by too much shared time together, to influence us back into sinning. The Bible says, **"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"** (2 Corinthians 5:17).

As we become new people in Jesus and mature, we should not live like unbelievers do. **"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"** [Romans 12:2]. We find our attitudes, desires, and, as a result of His indwelling presents, our whole lifestyle changing. The Apostle Paul recognized this and wrote:

***"Why all this stress on behavior? Because, as I think you have realized the present time is of highest importance – it is time to wake up to reality. Every day brings God's salvation nearer than the day in which we took the first step of faith. The night is nearly over, the day has almost dawned. Let us therefore fling away the things that men do in the dark, let us arm ourselves for the fight of the day! Let us live cleanly, as in the daylight, not in the delights of getting drunk or playing with sex, nor yet in quarreling or jealousies. Let us be Christ's men from head to foot, and give no chances to the flesh to have its fling."***

**[Romans 13:11-14 Phillips].**