

## **GOD WANTS TO HAVE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OF US**

Only Jesus can save, and it is up to each individual to repent and ask for salvation. God will lead us to the water of life, but He will not make us drink it. That is our job.

After salvation we need to focus on the goal of eternal life. This usually requires a change in the way we think and act that is directly opposed to everything we have been accustomed to. We are told not to worry about worldly things, but to seek God.

*Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Salvation and spiritual growth are first, works is next, and eternal life is the goal. When Jesus was staying in the house of Mary and Martha, Martha wanted Mary to get up from the feet of Jesus and help with the work of serving. Jesus describes a personal relationship with him and learning from him as better than works.

*Luke 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."*

This does not mean works and serving others is not important. If works were not important the Bible would not tell us we will be judged according to them. It does mean that before we concern ourselves with the work we will be given to do that we must first seek our own salvation, and grow toward spiritual maturity in order to gain the ability to do good works.

God gives us a measure of faith. Through his grace (ability he provides that we can't earn or gain ourselves) we are given salvation for the asking. This became possible because Jesus died for us on the cross.

The Apostle Peter wrote about how we should add to our faith.

*2 Peter 1:5-7 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.*

Peter did not say God or other humans would somehow give us these things. He clearly states that we should make the effort. It is important to remember that even though we have the responsibility, we can't get it done without God's help (grace).

He then tells us why we should take it upon ourselves to grow.

*2 Peter 1:8-11 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

The short of it is, other than actually gaining salvation (only Jesus can do that), it is the responsibility of each of us to:

**Ask for our salvation.**

**Do our part to develop our personal relationship with God and do the work God has set aside for us.**

**Remain steadfast, and persevere to the end.**

Thoughts by John Oliver

a grateful and unworthy servant