

GREAT DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE

(Special English Edition)

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For Rogma International, Inc.

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THE BELIEVER'S STANDING AND STATE

INTRODUCTION

There is considerable confusion among Christians because many believers do not know the difference between the believer's standing (his position in Christ) and the believer's state (his spiritual condition at any moment).

The weaknesses, failures and sins of those who say they are born again confuse people who are not believers. The unbelievers do not know that there is great difference between the believer's standing and state.

The plan in this lesson is to help you to understand the difference between these two. I want to erase any possible confusion. I want to put your hearts and minds at ease if this matter troubles you.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS LESSON

- It is important to understand that God declares every believer perfect through faith in Christ. Many temptations can still come to every believer. A believer may be weak in his Christian life because his old sinful nature is still within him.
- Unless we make a distinction between the believer's standing in Christ and the way he lives, it is impossible to understand the whole Bible correctly, especially the Epistles.
- The writers of the Epistles make it clear that the moment a sinner receives Christ as Lord and Savior, he becomes a son of God and a joint-heir with Christ. His standing (position in Christ) is complete, perfect. His standing can never change. It will forever be just like it is today. Nothing can ever improve our standing. Nobody can add anything to our standing.
- The same writers of the Epistles also tell us that some believers often live like unbelievers. They are weak and follow the people of this world. They do not obey the Word of God and need to grow in the Lord. We need to warn them about their sin.
- The unbelievers do not understand this difference. Therefore it is very important that you as a student understand it clearly. I want you to be able to explain it to others. I sincerely trust that this lesson will accomplish what I have planned.

THE LESSON

I. OUR STANDING IN CHRIST IS PERFECT AND COMPLETE

Our "standing" is what we are and what we have in Christ from the moment we believe. What is our standing? How does God see us? Is our "standing" or "position" perfect?

- A. Colossians 2:10 – We are complete in Him.
- B. Hebrews 10:14 – Christ made His people perfect forever.
- C. 1 John 4:17 – We will be without fear, because in this world we are like Him. According to our position in Christ, He shares with us who He is, where He is and what He is.
- D. Ephesians 1:4 – God chose us in love in order that we will be His separated people. A people who are without blame before Him.
- E. 1 Corinthians 1:30 – It is God who made us part of Christ Jesus. Christ has become wisdom from God for us. Christ is the reason we are right with God and have freedom from sin. Christ is the reason we are holy. As believers, we possess all these things now and forever.
- F. Ephesians 1:6 – By grace God accepted us in Christ Jesus.
- G. Ephesians 1:3 – God sees every believer as "in Christ Jesus." Paul uses this phrase, or one like it, 28 times in the book of Ephesians alone. Our perfection, acceptance, and position are all "in Christ" by the grace of our wonderful Lord.

II. OUR PERFECT AND COMPLETE STANDING IS BASED ENTIRELY ON THE WORK OF CHRIST

What we have and what we are in Christ is entirely by grace. It is a free gift. God did not give it to us because we deserve it. We are not worthy of receiving it. We did not earn this gift by working for it. We received this gift because of the work of Christ on the cross.

- A. Hebrews 10:14 – Christ made His people perfect forever.
- B. Revelation 1:5 – Jesus is the one who loves us. And Jesus is the One who freed us from our sins with His blood.
- C. Galatians 3:13 – Christ took away the curse of the law. He put Himself under the curse of the law for us. Read also Ephesians 1:7 and 1 Peter 1:18-19.
- D. 2 Corinthians 5:21 – God made Christ sin for us in order that He can declare us right with God through Christ.
- E. Revelation 5:10 – God made these people priests for Him.
- F. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 – God brought us back to Himself by Jesus Christ. He was not counting the sins of people against them.
- G. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 – Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost because He bought you with a price.

III. WHAT DOES OUR STANDING INCLUDE?

When the believer understands what he has received, he will feel humble and happy. We are forever perfect in God's eyes. God gave us this standing through His grace that has no limits.

- A. We are now Sons of God (1 John 3:2; Romans 8:16).
- B. We are now inheritors. On the one hand we inherit from God. On the other hand we are inheritors together with Christ (Romans 8:17).
- C. We are now the King's priests (Revelation 1:6; 1 Peter 2:9).
- D. God has accepted us in the One whom He loves (Ephesians 1:6).
- E. We are now members of Christ's body (Ephesians 5:30).
- F. We are now complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10).
- G. We are now perfect through the offering of Christ (Hebrews 10:14).
- H. We are now elect according to the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2). God chose us in Christ (Ephesians 1:4).
- I. Now Christ bought us back from the slave market of sin and set us free (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Christ made us right with God (Romans 3:24; 5:1), sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 10:10,14), reconciled (2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:21) and according to our position, glorified (Romans 8:30).
- J. We are now "a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- K. God looks at us as righteous "in Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:30; Romans 3:22-23; Philippians 3:9).

IV. WHEN DOES OUR STANDING BEGIN?

The very moment a person places his faith in Christ for salvation all of the above things become true immediately. He receives these blessings at once. Our standing is not a blessing we will receive in heaven. The believer receives all these blessings immediately because of his faith in Christ alone.

- A. John 3:18 – God does not condemn the person who believes on Christ.
- B. John 3:36 – The person who believes has everlasting life. It is a present possession.
- C. John 1:12 – He gave authority to become (be) the sons (children) of God to as many as received Him as Savior. That is to all the people that believe on His name.
- D. Romans 5:1 – God declared us right with Himself because of our faith in Christ.
- E. 1 John 5:1 – The people who believe that Jesus is the Christ, are the children of God.
- F. Acts 13:39 – Everyone who believes is right with God.
- G. Romans 4:5 – A person cannot do any work to make himself right with God. That person must trust in Christ. Then God accepts that person's faith and He declares him right with God. (Note also Romans 3:21-22.)

*The Believer's Standing and State***V. CAN A BELIEVER IMPROVE HIS STANDING OR CAN THE BELIEVER DO SOMETHING TO ADD TO THIS STANDING?**

The answer of course is NO! A thousand times NO!

- A. God accepted us in the One He loves (Ephesians 1:6). Our standing is that we are perfect in Christ. Christ is the reason God set us apart for Himself. Christ is the reason we are right with God (1 Corinthians 1:30). We cannot improve Christ. In Christ I am just as He is (1 John 4:17).
- B. All we have and all we are, we are by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:5,8; Romans 3:24; 2 Corinthians 8:9). We cannot add anything to our standing by any kind of works. Our standing is a gift from God.
 1. Galatians 5:4 – If you try to become right with God through the law, then you are no longer with Christ. Then you have left God's grace.
 2. Romans 4:4 – When a person works, his pay is not a gift. He earns the pay he gets.
 3. Romans 11:5-6 – God chose a few people by His grace. If God chose His people by grace, then their works did not make them God's people. If they can become God's people by their works, then God's gift of grace is not really a gift.

VI. WHAT ABOUT THE STANDING OF WELL-KNOWN, IMPORTANT CHRISTIANS?

Do some strong important Christians have a greater standing before God than some poor, weak believers who are not well known? Believers who are not strong and do not know much about the Bible?

Again, the answer is a firm and final NO! We do not receive our standing before God by our talents. We do not receive our standing in Christ according to our riches or our education. Our standing before God does not depend on our standing among people. The weakest believer on earth has exactly the same standing before God as the most well known believer. He has the same standing if he has repented toward God and honestly placed his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read 2 Samuel 14:14; Mark 12:14; Romans 2:11; Acts 10:34; Galatians 2:6. We see that all men are sinners in the eyes of a holy God. God does not look differently on any person, no matter who or what that person is.

VII. WHAT WAS OUR STATE BEFORE WE BELIEVED?

By our state, we mean our spiritual condition in the eyes of God. The following verses describe our state (condition) before we had any standing (position) before God.

- A. We were lost to God (Luke 19:10) and had wandered away from God (Isaiah 53:6).
- B. We were blind to the truth (Ephesians 4:18).
- C. Sin separated us from God (Ephesians 4:18).
- D. We were without hope (Ephesians 2:12).
- E. We possessed a nature that rebelled against God and did not respect Him (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21).
- F. We were dead in our sins (Ephesians 2:1). We walked according to Satan's wishes and according to our own sinful desires. We followed the people who refused to obey God (Ephesians 2:2-3).
- G. We were "without strength" and "ungodly" (Romans 5:6).
- H. We had deceitful hearts (Jeremiah 17:9).
- I. We were all unclean (Isaiah 64:6).
- J. We were under the control of sin. We did not have God's righteousness. We were without understanding. We were worthless to God. We had no fear of God in our hearts (Romans 3:9-18).
- K. God condemned us. God was angry with us. God was going to judge us (John 3:18, 36; Hebrews 9:27).

When we receive Christ we are born again (John 1:12-13). Christ immediately begins to live in us through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:17; Galatians 2:20). We receive the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:13).

When we believe, we have a new life to live. We receive a new nature that we must show to others. What about our old sinful nature, which we received from Adam? Does the old nature disappear? Does God destroy the old nature? No! It is still there. We still possess it (Galatians 5:17; Romans 7:17-23),

The Believer's Standing and State

and herein lies the problem of the believer's state (spiritual condition) over against his standing (position before God).

Every believer has two natures. The new nature is perfect in Christ, but every believer must learn to overcome the weakness of his old nature. All the time he must try to bring his state (spiritual condition) up to his standing (his position before God). He must live according to his standing in Christ.

Here are a few illustrations:

- Christ made His people perfect forever (Hebrews 10:14), but we should try to become perfect in the way we live, because we respect God (2 Corinthians 7:1).
 - We were "crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20), and the Bible tells us that we consider ourselves as dead to sin (Romans 6:11).
 - We are "holy in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1), but the Bible tells us that we must "live worthy of the call with which God has called us" (Ephesians 4:1).
 - We are "complete in Him" (Colossians 2:10), but the Bible tells us to "grow in grace" (2 Peter 3:18) and "add to our faith" (2 Peter 1:5).
- ♦ *Look for other illustrations There are many more. For a more complete discussion of the believer's two natures, see Lesson 14.*

VIII. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE BIBLE THAT SHOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR STANDING AND OUR STATE

- A. Matthew 5:14 – You are the light of the world.
Matthew 5:16 – Let your light shine before men.
 - B. Ephesians 5:8 – Now you are light in the Lord.
Ephesians 5:8 – Live as children of light.
 - C. 1 Thessalonians 5:5 – You are all the children of light.
1 Thessalonians 5:6 – Let us not sleep, as do others.
 - D. 1 Peter 2:9 – God chose you as His special people. You are the King's priests. You are a holy nation. You are people who belong to God.
1 Peter 2:11 – I beg you to stay away from the sinful things your bodies want to do. These things fight against your soul.
 - E. 1 Corinthians 6:11 – God washed you clean, God separated you, and God declared you right with Himself in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
1 Corinthians 6:7 – There is something completely wrong among you.
 - F. 1 Corinthians 1:2 – You are a people that God separated in Christ Jesus. God called you His separated people.
1 Cor. 1:11 – I heard that there are arguments among you. 1 Cor. 3:3 – You are still not spiritual people.
 - G. Galatians 3:26 – You are all the children of God by faith.
Galatians 4:9 – Why do you turn back to those weak and useless rules you followed before?
 - H. Hebrews 10:14 – With one sacrifice Christ made His people perfect forever.
Philippians 3:12 – I do not mean that I am already exactly like God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal.
- ♦ *There are many more such illustrations. Search some out for yourself in order that the Word of God will build you up in the grace and knowledge of God.*

CONCLUSION

It is very important that we do not use the weakness of our old nature as an excuse to do sin. Paul writes about this. Do you think that we should continue so that God will give us more and more grace? No! We died to our old sinful lives. How can we continue living with sin? Instead, we should crucify our old sinful selves all the time (Galatians 5:24). We should think of ourselves as "dead to sin" (Romans 6:11). We must put the old man with his sinful works out of our way of life (Colossians 3:9). The believer must live by following the Spirit (Galatians 5:16). The believer must grow in grace (2 Peter 3:18). We should try to become perfect in the way we live, because we respect God (2 Corinthians 7:1). I pray that God will give you wisdom to understand His Word.

**GREAT BIBLE DOCTRINES EXAM
LESSON 32**

Questions to be answered by every student enrolled in the Rogma International Free Bible Study Course

Register No _____

Name _____

Address _____

Choose and Round O the correct answer in the following: -

1. A believer's standing is perfect in Christ,: (Value 4 points)
 - a. and he can become sinless and perfect in this life.
 - b. but he is still subject to temptation.
 - c. therefore he cannot fail in his Christian life.

2. Which of the following verses show the believer's standing in Christ? (Value 8 points)
(Mark all the ones that show this truth)
 - a. Colossians 2:10
 - b. 1 John 4:17
 - c. Ephesians 1:6
 - d. 1 Corinthians 1:30

3. Our standing is based upon: (Value 4 points)
 - a. what we do for God.
 - b. the work of Christ for us.
 - c. our spiritual condition.

4. The believer is given right standing before God: (Value 4 points)
 - a. the moment he/she receives Christ.
 - b. the moment he/she speaks in tongues.
 - c. the moment he/she receives this good feeling.

5. Can a believer improve his standing before God? (Value 4 points)
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No.
 - c. He can if he works hard at it.

6. What is the difference, before God, between the standing of two people who are in Christ? (Value 4 points)
 - a. It depends on how hard a person works.
 - b. A great preacher does not have a more secure standing than a lowly saint.
 - c. A sincere Christian has a more secure standing than one who is not sincere.

7. The believer's standing is: (Value 4 points)
 - a. his position in Christ.
 - b. his spiritual condition.
 - c. his sanctification.

8. The believer's state is: (Value 4 points)
 - a. his position in Christ.
 - b. his spiritual condition.
 - c. his justification.

9. Matthew 5:14 and 5:16 show the difference between the believer's standing and his state in what area of life? (Value 4 points)
- The spiritual area.
 - In being a testimony or witness.
 - In being sincere in your faith.
10. In Ephesians 5:8, two phrases indicate our standing and our state. They both involve: (Value 4 points)
- the way we live before the world.
 - the way we walk on our physical legs.
 - the way we talk to others.
11. What should the believer do about the flesh? (Value 4 points)
- Listen to it.
 - Satisfy it.
 - Crucify it.
12. The believer's spiritual state: (Value 4 points)
- can change from time to time.
 - cannot change.
 - can change only when God changes it.
13. The believer's standing in Christ: (Value 4 points)
- can change from time to time.
 - changes when his feelings change.
 - cannot change.
14. Hebrews 10:14 says that a believer has been perfected forever. What he must do regarding his state is found in which reference? (Value 4 points)
- Romans 6:11
 - Colossians 2:10
 - 2 Corinthians 7:1
15. Galatians 2:20 says that the believer has been crucified with Christ. What he is told to do with temptation is found in which verse? (Value 4 points)
- Romans 6:11
 - Colossians 2:10
 - 2 Corinthians 7:1

Matching.

Place the letter in front of the reference on the line in front of the appropriate phrase.

16. What is included in our standing in Christ? (Value 20 points)
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ___ We are sons of God. | a. Ephesians 1:6 |
| ___ We are a royal priesthood. | b. 2 Corinthians 5:17 |
| ___ We are accepted in the beloved | c. Colossians 2:10 |
| ___ We are complete in Christ. | d. 1 John 3:2 |
| ___ We are new creations in Christ. | e. 1 Peter 2:9 |

17. What was our state before we became believers? (Value 16 points)

Place the letter in front of the phrase on the line in front of the appropriate reference.

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ Isaiah 53:6 | a. We had deceitful hearts. |
| ___ Ephesians 2:12 | b. We were dead in sin. |
| ___ Ephesians 2:1 | c. We were lost. |
| ___ Jeremiah 17:9 | d. We were without hope. |