

# Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

## Lesson 28

### *Creation Waits Expectantly For God's Children*

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**Romans 8:19-21 (NIV)** - *The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.*

As we examine the condition of the earth, it is obvious that it is far from what God intended. God created the earth to be a beautiful and serene habitation for his people. However, rebellion and sin brought decay upon the face of the whole earth. Humankind, originally created in God's image, has flagrantly marred the image of God through the grossness of sin and irresponsibility. Rejecting the Holy Spirit's influence for good, the god of this world (Satan) has torn apart the lives of many, leaving them feeling hopeless and all alone.

The good news of the gospel is that no matter how much corruption there is upon the face of the earth, sin will not have the last word! Man cannot frustrate the works of God, because God does not walk in crooked paths. His paths are straight and his course is established on eternal righteousness.

**Luke 3:4-6 (NIV)** - *As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.'"*

A glorious freedom awaits those who have a heart hunger to be liberated from the bondage of sin. It is a freedom that is enjoyed now by the children of God. For those who desire in their heart to change, there is no demon sent from hell that can stop this liberation from taking place. For those locked away in prison, God hears your humble prayers. He hears the cries of prisoners with the same degree of love and concern He has for anyone else, who desires with all their heart to move off the crooked roads they've been traveling. God hears the urgent pleas for help in making the rough ways smooth. The question is, are

you accepting the help He is offering. God's Spirit is reaching out with love to numerous souls, but know this vital truth; it is not his love that saves us. Rather, it is *our response* to his love that saves us, ultimately bringing deliverance to our souls.

This truth was clearly expressed in a letter I received from a prison inmate. *"I am so sick and tired of coming back and forth to this place, but I now know that God is the only one who could help me and deliver me from my addiction...I love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with all my heart and soul. I am very proud to say I am a child of God now...I am now focusing on what God has planned for me..."*

What this inmate is learning from God's Spirit is priceless. It is the key to spiritual growth: ***Unless we are willing to take our rightful place as God's child, He cannot take His rightful place as our Father.*** It is not that He can't, in the sense of his ability to do so, but that He won't. Why not? Because He respects the very right He has given us, to choose him or to reject him as our Father.

Why, indeed, should God be our Father if we are not willing to be his child? You see, unless we approach God with humility, wholly accepting him as our Father, we will see no need to sit under his discipline and correction. The pattern is much too familiar. Thinking we know what is best, we come with an attitude. We are too busy doing all the talking to hear a word He has to say. Our pride and excuses become a smoke screen, which blocks out the loving correction He longs to give. Reciting the same old problems isn't going to cut it with God. There isn't anything we can say that God hasn't heard before. He knows the many reasons why we are the way we are, and why we act the way we do. Because God loves us, He doesn't want us to use these reasons repeatedly as "excuses" to stay the way we are.

And so, He summons each of us to step up to the plate, learn from Him, and become a responsible child of God.

**Proverbs 3:11-12 (KJV)** - *My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his*

*correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

By now, you must be getting the picture. Becoming a child of God is not an automatic thing. It is more than answering an alter call at the front of the church to accept what Jesus did for us on the cross. During an emotional high, anyone can make the short term commitment to get out of their seat and walk the distance to the front of the church at the conclusion of a worship service. Caught up in the mood of the moment, it is natural to *feel good* about ourselves (even shed some tears), when we've just heard the good news that God sent Jesus to take away our sins. But, what happens after we leave the worship service and get back to daily living? How will we feel then?

If we think what happened in that service was the end of our sin problem, we will be in for a big surprise down the road. We will become disappointed, even angry with God when the sin we thought we got rid of, keeps showing up in our lives to haunt us. When this happens it is quite reasonable for us to ask, "What does God really want from me anyway? I've been reading my Bible, I pray, I'm trying to follow the 10 commandments...why isn't my life any better?"

God wants us to get our priorities straight. Focusing on the 10 commandments is not top priority. God wants to do more than just take away individual sins. Those sins are only symptoms of a much deeper problem. What God really wants from us is cooperation! He wants us to unite with the Holy Spirit, to get rid of our *sin nature*, once and for all. Until our *nature* changes, we will be miserable. We will keep on sinning, because that is the only thing our old sorry-self has become expert at doing.

***1 John 3:6-7, 9 (NIV) - No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous...No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.***

If we are to be born of God, becoming more than a mere creature living in daily ignorance of his ways; we need to give God the *right* (through the Holy Spirit) to clean up all the debris in our lives. Not just some of it, but all of it! I'm not talking here about an external cleansing, where we only appear to look

good on the outside. If we try to do good on our own strength, disregarding the help of the Holy Spirit, we will fail miserably. I'm talking about a deep internal cleansing that is personally designed by God to liberate us from our old *sin nature*.

How is this to be accomplished? When we say the prayer of repentance, asking Jesus to come into our hearts, we need to mean it! This is the test of our sincerity. We have not truly invited Jesus to come into our heart to *live*, if we turn around and refuse the Holy Spirit the right to cleanse us of sin. This cleansing is necessary, because it is impossible to repent of our sins if we are not willing to face the truth of what we have done. To put it another way, if we cannot recognize our sin for what it is, an outright offense to God, then our old sin nature remains.

**In summary:** Becoming a child of God is not an automatic thing. Just being here does not make us a child of God. God waits patiently for us to respond with true repentance, becoming as one, his sons and daughters. It is through the powerful response of God's children, that glorious freedom from the bondage of sin will be manifested upon the earth.

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#### **Questions For Personal or Group Study:**

1. How does *our* response to God's love save us?
2. If we desire to sit under God's discipline and correction, what attitude ought we to have when we approach Him?
3. How do we damage our relationship with God and our spiritual growth, when we do all the talking?
4. How will we know when our prayer of repentance is genuine? Can we face the truth about our own sin?
5. Explain why we must take our rightful place as God's child, before he can take his rightful place as our Father.
6. Why is it more important to change our sin nature, than it is to focus on individual sins?