

BELIEF

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Introduction

The word predominately translated as believe in the New Testament is the Greek word **pisteuo** which appears in 248 scriptures. The fundamental idea of belief is one of confidence, conviction and trust and is closely associated with faith "pistis." All beliefs, religious or secular, have at its foundation certain aspects or elements of faith. Beliefs attained through observation, examination and persuasion require faith in the five senses and the workings of the human mind. Beliefs attained through study and learning require faith in the validity and accuracy of the texts being used, whether it be the Bible or secular texts. Notwithstanding, there is a difference between faith and belief in the New Testament. Faith is a gift from God (Eph. 2:8, Rom. 1:11-12, 12:6, 1Cor. 13:2, Jn. 4:10) and given to those who believe. Beliefs, on the other hand can be obtained through the teachings and persuasion of others, through the human process of observation, examination and reason, or through learning and study. Beliefs therefore may be obtained through human effort while faith is a gift from God.

Other words like **plerophoreo** and **peitho** have also been translated as belief but used less extensively (about 50 verses.) The translation of Plerophoreo and peitho as belief imply persuasion or an inducement to believe. In order to obtain a fuller sense of the power or influence of belief in the New Testament it is useful to examine what the scriptures have to say about unbelief or faithlessness. The words used to express non-belief is **apistos**, **apistia**, **apisteo**, **apeitheo** and **apeithia**. All imply elements contrary to belief and faith. Knowing how the contrary elements of faith and belief are used in the New Testament have strong implications in understanding the positive elements as well. The fundamental uses of belief in the New Testament is directed to:

The saving work and person of Jesus Christ: The Gospel

The New Testament furnishes the facts which illustrate the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in his divine birth, his perfect life, his sufferings and death, and his resurrection to life. Christ is the foundation for the good news - the gospel - which believers receive and proclaim. The gospel centers in Christ because the gospel is Christ. The gospel brings to mankind redemption and salvation through Christ, the perfect expression of God's love and the very life and heart of Christianity. New Testament scriptures reveal to believers many aspects concerning Christ, namely: the perfect life of Christ among men; the fulfillment of Christ as the prophetic Messiah; all Christ's miracles as "restorative" and part of His redemptive plan for mankind; the resurrection of Christ as an absolute historical fact; the transformation of human character as a result of the believers "in Christ" position, and the Holy Spirit's witness to the believer's personal adoption in Christ. The following scriptures derive their character and significance from the person and life of Jesus Christ.

John 20:31

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."

Mt. 8:13, 9:28, 18:6; Mk. 1:15, 5:36, 9:23-24, 16:6,16-17; Lk.1:1,20, 8:12-13,50, 12:36, 22:67, 24:11,41; Jn. 1:7,12,50, 2:11,22-24, 3:15-16,18,36, 4:21,42,50-53, 5:24,31-40, 6:29,35,40,47,69, 7:31,38-39, 8:24,30-31, 9:38, 10:37-38,42, 11:15,25-27,40-45,48, 12:42,44,46, 13:19,39, 14:1,12, 16:9,27,30-31, 17:8, 20:8,31; Ac. 8:37, 10:43, 11:17, 14:23, 15:5, 16:31, 19:4, 22:19, Rom. 1:6,

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4:23-25, 9:33, 10:4,9-11; 1Cor. 1:21, 3:5; 1Cor. 15:2; Gal. 2:16; Phil. 1:29, 3:3; 1Ths. 4:14; 2Ths. 1:10, 2:11; 1Tm. 3:16; 2Tm. 1:12; Heb. 4:3, 10:39; 1Pet. 1:21, 2:6-7; 1Jn. 3:23, 5:1,5,10,13

Persuasion of God's revealed truths

Christians are called upon to believe God's revelation to mankind. The methods by which mankind becomes aware of God's revealed truths and realities is through General Revelation, Specific Revelation and Continuous Revelation.

General Revelation is that which is given to all men through nature and history, and in the nature of man himself. The reality and validity of general revelation is declared in both Old and New Testaments (Job 12:7-15, 35:10-11, 37:6-7, Ps. 19:1; Isa. 40:26; Ac. 14:15-17; Rom. 1:19-20, 2:14-16).

Romans 1:20

"For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."

As a result of sin entering the world, the power of general revelation to bring mankind into a relationship with our Creator has been reduced or nullified (Rom. 1:24-32.) Sin therefore was the catalyst which gave rise to the specific revelation of God's truths.

Specific Revelation is brought to mankind by God through the ministry of Jesus Christ and Divine Inspiration. The Holy Scriptures is the divinely inspired revelation from God. The Scriptures restate the truths proclaimed in nature, in history, and in man himself. God, through specific revelation declares salvation for mankind in Jesus Christ. Specific revelation is proven by external evidences (miracles and prophesy) and internal evidences (the content of the revelation itself). The internal evidences is the greatness of the revealed truths, their adaptation to the necessities of human life, their practical effects when accepted, and above all the personal character of Jesus Christ who is the focus and center of the whole revelation. In fact, it is Jesus Christ, the supreme medium of revelation, who is the proof that the revelation of scripture has come from God. Just as the sun is known by its shining, revelation is known by Jesus Christ.

John 14:6

"Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

John 17:5,8

"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was...For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me."

Mt. 21:25,32; Mk. 11:31; Lk. 1:1,45, 20:5, 24:25; Jn. 3:12, 4:39-47, 8:30-31, 10:37-38, 11:48, 12:11,36, 14:10-11,29, 17:8,20-21, 20:27-29; Ac. 4:4, 5:14, 8:12-13, 9:42, 11:21, 13:12,43,48, 14:1, 15:7, 16:1,34 17:4,12, 34, 18:4,8, 19:8,26, 21:20, 26:27-29, 28:23-24; Rom. 4:20-21, 8:38, 11:23, 14:4-5; 1Cor. 15:11; 2Cor. 5:11; Gal.1:10; Phil.1:14; 1Ths. 2:13, 2Ths. 2:13; 1Tm. 1:16; 2Tim. 4:17; Heb. 11:6; Jam. 2:19,23.

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Continuous Revelation is God's continuing to illuminate truth through the Holy Spirit. God reveals truth through inspiration and illumination. It is important to distinguish the difference in meanings between divinely given revelation, inspiration and illumination. Revelation, which may be oral or written, is God communicating to man truth which otherwise could not be known (2Tim. 3:16). Inspiration is the divine influence exerted upon the sacred writers by God's Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). Illumination is a ministry of the Holy Spirit which enables all who are in a right relation with God to understand the objective written revelation (1 Cor. 2:12-14). In other words revelation comprehends God *giving* truth, inspiration accurately *receives* the divinely revealed truth and illumination is the *understanding* of the divinely revealed truth. Revelation as it relates to the divinely inspired Holy Scripture is closed. There are no other writings which can be added to the canon. Illumination, however, is in continuous operation. It is granted to those chosen by God to be recipients of that ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is not a gift granted to all believers:

2 Cor. 12:18-19, 27-31

"But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be?...Now you are the body of Christ and members individually. And God has appointed these in the Church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the greater gifts.

Adherence to and reliance on God's word, love and promises

This refers to the believers *assurance* regarding the certainty and validity of revelation and salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to those who believe. The Christian's reliance and assurance of salvation demand *adherence*, that is the putting beliefs into practice once accepted.

John 4:49-50

"The nobleman said to Jesus, Sir, come down before my child dies!" Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way."

Matthew 13:23

"But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Mt. 12:50, 13:23,38, 27:43; Lk. 6:45, 16:11; Jn. 4:49-50, 8:31-32,47, 10:4-5,27, 12:44, 13:35, 15:14, 19:35; Ac. 2:38,47, 15:11, 21:25, 24:14; Rom. 4:17-18, 6:1-23, 8:35-39, 15:14; 1Cor. 1:21, 13:7, 14:22; 2Cor. 1:9 4:13; Gal. 2:7, 3:1,6,22, 5:7,10; Eph. 1:19; Phil. 1:6,25, 2:24; 1Ths. 1:7, 2:4,10; 2Ths. 3:4; 1Tm. 1:11, 4:3,10,12; 2Tm. 1:5, 2:13, 4:5; Tit. 1:3, 3:8; Plm. 1:21; Heb. 2:13, 6:9, 11:13,31, 13:17-18; 1Pet. 1:8; 1Jn. 3:18-19, 4:1,16

In the New Testament salvation refers to the believer being saved from the power and dominion of sin through Jesus Christ, the author of salvation (Mt. 1:21, Ac. 4:2, Heb. 2:10, 5:9). It is a free

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gift of God, but is conditioned upon repentance and faith in Christ (Jn. 3:16, Heb. 2:3). Can salvation be lost? Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:13-14 ...

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory."

Paul tells us upon belief and faith in Jesus Christ we become sanctified "in Him" and are "sealed" by the Holy Spirit, the "guarantor" of salvation. Our salvation is guaranteed in Christ! The Greek word translated as guarantee in the NIV is **arrhabon** which literally means earnest money which is a promise, pledge, or down payment that the full amount will be paid. The New King James version and Amplified Bible translate arrhabon as guarantee. The King James Authorized Version translates as "earnest" while the New American Standard translates as "pledge." All mean the same thing. God promises salvation to believers by grace through faith in Jesus. He gives us His Holy Spirit as earnest money, His guarantee of the delivery of His promise. When God promises that He will do something, it is done, period. Please refer to the study, "Are We Eternally Secure?" for an indepth analysis of all scriptures used for and against eternal security.

The word arrhabon is used in two other scriptures. Let's examine the context of those scriptures.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

"Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." (NIV)

2 Corinthians 5:5

"Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." (NIV)

God reveals through specific revelation that any Christian occupying an in Christ position is guaranteed salvation. This guarantee is irrevocable (Rom. 11:29). If salvation is an irrevocable guarantee, what, if any, is the judgement for believers in Christ? And what about the in Christ believers who continue to sin and do not put into practice those elements of faith and belief?

The Bible has much to say concerning salvation and judgement. Although a significant portion of Christian theology is entrenched in the tenet that there is one general judgement, the Bible does not support this belief. The bible identifies *eight* distinct types of judgement (which will be discussed in the next section). 1 Corinthians 11 mentions the three types of judgement relegated to believers: A.) The judgement of believers, B.) The believers works, and C.) The believers judgement of self. The context of 1 Corinthians is the believer's behavior and attitudes concerning the Lord's Supper.

1 Cor. 11:28-32

"A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement upon himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgement. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world."

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Judgement of Believers

The judgement of believers takes the form of divine correction and chastisement. (1 Cor. 11:30-32, Heb. 12:3-15) It is God's disciplinary action against a sinning saint. The "sin unto death" (1 Jn. 5:16-20, 1 Cor. 5:1-5, Ac. 5:1-11) occurs when the believer, through deliberate continued sin brings reproach upon the name of Christ and upon his salvation by saving grace, forfeits his life and fellowship among believers "that his spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus." The judgement of believing Christians has nothing to do with losing salvation.

Judgement of Believer's Works

This type of judgement concerns Christians only and is emphatically not a judgement for sins. Judgement for sins has taken place at Calvary through the shed blood of our Savior Jesus Christ "once and for all time."

Heb 10:10

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (NKJ)

The believer will not be faced with this judgement again (Jn. 5:24, Rom. 8:1) because sins forgiven by the shed blood of Christ will be remembered no more (Heb. 10:17). The judgement seat of Christ will divinely appraise the believing Christian's works, deeds and service as it impacts the believer's measure of reward or loss of reward.

2 Cor 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (NKJ)

Rom 14:7-12

7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God."

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. (NKJ)

Eph 6:8

knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. (NKJ)

2 Tim 4:8

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Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing. (NKJ)

Believer's Judgement of Self

This has to do with the stern critique and criticism that a believer will exercise concerning his own ways as contrasted to: A) the divine will of God as manifested through Jesus Christ and B) his turning away from sin.

1 Cor 11:31-32

- 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.
32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (NKJ)

I Jn 1:7-10

- 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (NKJ)

Self-judgement involves confession before Christ for immediate cleansing and restoration of the believer for continuing fellowship and "walking in the light."

Belief as a condition to receive the Holy Spirit; and the Power and Divinity of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit performs a special work "in every believer" from the moment the believer exercises saving faith in Christ. This special work is unique and personal to every believer (see section on faith). The Holy Spirit regenerates and baptizes the believer into union with other believers in the Body of Christ ...

1 Cor 12:13-14

- 13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.
14 For in fact the body is not one member but many. (NKJ)

... and into union with Christ Himself

Rom 6:3-5

- 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?
4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

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- 5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, (NKJ)

The Holy Spirit perpetually indwells in every believer ...

John 14:17

"the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. (NKJ)

Rom 8:9-11

- 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.
10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.
11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. (NKJ)

1 Cor 6:19-20

- 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJ)

... and seals every believer until the day of redemption.

Eph 4:30

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (NKJ)

The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ inaugurated the new age of the Holy Spirit with its unique and distinctive ministry. Christ prophetically announced - as His ascension gift - a drastic change in the Holy Spirit's ministry to one of ... regeneration, baptism, sealing, and illumination of revelation.

... Eternal Life through an in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit

John 7:38-39

- 38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."
39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (NKJ)

Rom 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (NKJ)

Eph 1:13-14

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- 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (NKJ)

... Born Again of the Spirit

John 3:3-7

- 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"
5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
7 "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (NKJ)

... Conviction of Sin, Righteousness and Judgment

John 16:7-11

- 7 "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.
8 "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
9 "of sin, because they do not believe in Me;
10 "of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;
11 "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. (NKJ)

Rom 8:14-16

- 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.
15 For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."
16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (NKJ)

... Freely given to all who believe and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior

Acts 10:45

And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. (NKJ)

Acts 19:2

he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit." (NKJ)

... as God's GUARANTEE to the believer

Eph 1:13-14

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- 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,
- 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. (NKJ)

Blessings and kindness toward believers; believers love towards others; to do good deeds, and belief as it relates to God's powerful signs and wonders

God promises special blessings and kindness to all believers. These blessings manifest through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. A ministry of the Spirit is to "regenerate" believers. Regeneration is the spiritual change brought about in a believer as a result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is being born again into a new life in Christ Jesus (Mt. 19:28, Tit. 3:5) and the beginning of change in the believer's moral and spiritual nature.

Titus 3:8

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men."

Mk. 9:42, 16:15-18; Lk. 1:45; Ac. 18:27; Rom. 2:7, 13:11, 14:2, 15:14; 1Tm. 5:8,16, 6:2; 1Jn. 3:18-18, 23

Regeneration should not be confused with justification which is a change in our relationship with God as a result of divine forgiveness; or sanctification which is our in Christ position; or repentance which is the "turning" of a soul from sin to God.

The power of prayer and not using Christ's name in vain

Believers have the privilege of close communion with God through prayer. It is the expression of the believer's dependence upon God for everything.

Matthew 21:22

"And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

The context of how prayer is used with belief and demonstrates the power of prayer in general devotion.

Mark 11:23-24

23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will come to pass, he will have whatever he says.

24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (NKJ)

The elements of power in prayer include fervency of mind ...

James 5:16-20

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- 16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.
- 17 Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months.
- 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.
- 19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back,
- 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. (NKJ)

... the help of the Holy Spirit

Rom 8:26-27

- 26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
- 27 Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (NKJ)

... and the power of Christ in His priestly office on our behalf.

Heb 4:14-16

- 14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.
- 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.
- 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (NKJ)

Christ presents our prayers to the Father mingled with His own blood and prayers. It is also for this reason non-believers cannot command the power of Christ merely by invoking His name.

Acts 19:13-17

- 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches."
- 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.
- 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"
- 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.
- 17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. (NKJ)

A non-believer calling upon God is sin for it is using God's name in vain. However, this by no means restricts God from responding to the prayers of a non-believer as a means to demonstrate His very existence, love, compassion, and forgiveness. The probability of a non-believer seeking prayer as a means of help is relatively low and the non-believers acceptance of God's intervention as a result of prayer is lower still.

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Relationships of believers with other believers and non-believers

Believers are to act in a loving and kind manner with all people, especially to those of the household of faith. The Bible clearly makes distinctions on how believers are to relate with one another and also how believers are to relate with non-believers.

Believers who are sanctified and occupy an in Christ position have a special relationship with other sanctified believers. They are bound together by the Holy Spirit to form the Body of Christ. The commonality of this special in Christ relationship motivated many believers in the early new covenant church to sell all their worldly possessions and to adopt a communal type of living arrangement. They lived in one accord and shared all things in common. Others continued to live in their private homes yet did not count their possessions as their own. All maintained a close relationship through daily fellowship, the breaking of bread (The Lord's Supper), by dining together, and by praising God in worship and prayer. Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-37, 5:12-14

While the selling of personal possessions for the common good of the believers was a practice of the early New Testament church it was certainly not a requirement. The story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 attest to the voluntary aspect of this practice. Their deaths was a result of lying to the Holy Spirit concerning the amount of their gift, and not because they chose to keep a portion for themselves. This event had a twofold purpose, first as a proof of the power and divinity of the Holy Spirit and second, as a proof of the apostles ministry to use the power of the Holy Spirit in performing miracles and healing. This event became known throughout the land and resulted in many conversions. Acts 5:12-16

Believers are instructed to settle disputes and contentions among themselves, not before the courts nor in the presence of unbelievers (1Cor. 6:1-11). The speaking of tongues is a sign for the unbelievers and not to be performed among believers. Prophecy, on the other hand, is for believers

1 Cor 14:22

Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. (NKJ)

The bible also teaches that the physical church is a "mixed" company. It is comprised of the saved, those who are sanctified in Christ - the spiritual union - with those who are unsaved, carnal believers not yet sanctified. The relationship of believers with non-believers has a set of characteristics unique unto itself. Although believers are not to have an "exclusive" relationship among themselves they are encouraged not to become yoked with non-believers. The bible instructs believers in the principle of exercising great care and caution on the nature of their relationships with unbelievers because believers are holy and unbelievers are not.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 7:1

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ... Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates the body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." (NIV)

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Believers are, however, expected to interact with their peers and their community at large. The bible gives guidelines concerning the nature of those relationships. Paul, when preaching the Word to non-believers gives some guidance regarding behavior.

Departure of, and Deliverance of believers from non-believers

Believers are to depart from those who hear the Word but refuse to believe, are hostile towards or publicly malign the Way.

Acts 19:8-9

8 And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God.

9 But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. (NKJ)

Rom 15:30-31

30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me,

31 that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, (NKJ)

Marriage to non-believers discouraged

Christians are not bound by the legal restraints imposed on marriage by the Mosaic Law. However, believers are encouraged not to marry or be bound together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1). Believers who are married to non-believers should not divorce their non-believing spouse on the grounds of their unbelief. However, if the unbelieving spouse wants to divorce, the believing spouse should allow them to do so (1Cor. 7:12-15, 1Pet. 3:1-2).

Pleasantly associate with non-believers

Christians are free under Christ from the yoke of bondage associated with the legalism of the Old Covenant and to do all things that do not violate the law of love. The law of love, however, does not bind or confine Christians to observe or give the appearance of observing other religious practices in the name of love or in the spirit of not giving offence. There are two good examples of this concerning the eating or not eating of certain foods. Although foods are the subject the verses, the principles discussed transcend food. They focus on the state of mind of Christians. One example regards the cultic food regulations of the Old Covenant and the other eating foods sacrificed to idols. In Romans 14, Christians need not to refrain from eating "unclean foods" (as characterized by the Old Covenant) because another is offended by your freedom in Christ. Those who continue to subject themselves to archaic food laws are referred to as "weak in faith." Christians should not be an occasion for those weak in faith to stumble by requiring them to eat foods which they believe to be unclean. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul encourages believers to eat all food without asking if it was sacrificed to idols. All food is from

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God and good if it is accepted with thanksgiving. However, if a believer accepts an invitation to dine with an unbeliever, and the unbeliever informs the believer this food was sacrificed before idols, refrain from eating for the sake of the conscience of the unbeliever who might regard the eating of that food as form of worship (1 Cor. 10:23-33).

Unbelief as directed to:

Not believing in Christ, His saving work and resurrection

The bible is replete with examples of people rejecting the opportunity to believe Christ. Some have directly rejected Christ during His ministry, refused to believe the resurrection had occurred even when confronted with numerous witnesses, refused the testimony of the apostles concerning the saving work and person of Jesus, and refused to accept the miracles of Christ and the apostles as evidence of God and His divine power.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him." John 3:36

Mt. 13:58, 24:23-26, 27:42, 28:17; Mk. 13:21, 15:32, 16:11-14,16; Lk. 8:12-13, 16:31, 24:11; Jn. 3:18,36, 5:24,38, 6:36,64, 7:5,48, 8:24,45-46, 9:13-34,35-41, 10:25-26,37-38, 11:48, 12:37-40, 20:25-27; Ac. 13:41, 14:2,19, 17:5, 21:14, 26:8, 28:24; Rom. 2:8,19 10:14-16, 11:20; Heb. 3:7-19; 1Pet. 2:7-8; **Leading to judgement:** Mk. 16:16; Lk. 12:46, Jn. 3:36; Rom. 2:8-9; 1Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:10, Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; 2Ths. 2:11-12, Heb. 3:18-19, 4:6,11, 10:39; 1Pet. 3:20, 4:17; Jude 5; Rev. 21:8; **Not leading to judgement:** Jn. 12:47; Rom. 11:25-32

Minds blinded to God's truth and revile believers

Biblical examples of God blinding the minds of some so they cannot accept and understand His truths. Others actively seek to persecute and harm the believers. God will deal directly with non-believers. Ac. 17:5, 21:14; Rom. 3:3; 2Cor. 3:13-14, 4:4; Tit. 1:15

"We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the Old Covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away." 2 Corinthians 3:13-16

Opportunity for God to demonstrate His love and forgiveness

"For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all."

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Romans 11:30-32

God chooses to demonstrate His love, kindness and forgiveness to all, believers and non-believers in how He relates to and deals with non-believers. Lk. 24:41; Rom. 3:3, 10:21, 11:23,30-32; Eph. 2:2; 1Tim. 1:13; 2Tim 2:13

Trusting worldliness or self over spirituality

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh,
but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."
Romans 8:5-6

Many do not believe because their trust and confidence is on the things of the world and not in the Spirit of God. Mk. 10:24; Lk. 12:18, 16:11, 18:9; Ac. 27:11; Rom. 8:5-6

Signs and wonders

"But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him."
John 12:37

Some reject the signs and wonders as evidence of God and His saving power. Mk. 9:19; Lk. 9:41; Jn. 4:48, 6:30, 9:11,13-34

Invoking Christ's name in vain to perform great acts and deeds

"Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out...Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding."
Acts 19:13,16

Those who do not believe do not have an in Christ position. Calling upon the name of Christ is useless in performing great signs and wonders for the non-believer. Mt. 17:18-21, Mk. 6:6