

# The Way We Were vs. The Way We Are

## Topic: Scope and Significance of Salvation

### Purpose of this study:

To help the new Christian understand in greater detail the scope and significance of what occurred when he invited Christ into his life. This should produce a deeper commitment and a greater motivation to go on with Christ.

### Motivation for teaching this study:

There is no way that a new Christian can possibly grasp all the things you shared with him about his salvation the last time you met with him. He needs time to evaluate his decision and let it sink in what has taken place. This study will give him a clear picture of what actually occurred when he believed, and it should motivate him to continue to seek God for his further growth.

### Introducing the Lesson:

Ask "How have things been going since our last meeting? Have you noticed any changes in your life since you have believed in Christ?" Be prepared for some heavy-duty questions. Remember just like a new born baby, he will probably have some immediate felt needs to be met first before you can get into his real needs.

### Teaching the Bible study:

This study is divided up into two parts: the condition before one received Christ and the condition after one received Christ. To best convey this truth, have the students fold their papers in half to cover one side at a time before opening up the sheet and contrasting the two sides.

### The Way We Were

**#1** - Having a correct definition of sin is extremely important. Sin in Romans 3:23 is described as "missing God's perfect mark." The glory of God is being perfect before Him in all that we think and do. No one can meet this standard and everyone stands condemned before God.

**#2** - Simply communicate that our sins have separated us from God. Ask them if before they received Christ, did God seem silent and far away? This verse explains why.

**#3** - When a person believes in Christ, his name is written in the Book of Life. During the Final judgment day, Jesus will cast those whose names are not written in the Book of Life into eternal fire, hell. This passage may be severe but the truth of their former condition before God must be clearly communicated.

**#4** - Ask "Were there times before you were a Christian, that you looked at your life and thought, 'I'm not such a bad guy after all. My good far outweighs my bad. I should go to heaven when I die.'" Regardless of how good we may have thought we were, all of our deeds were like filthy rags to God. We were born evil (Romans 3) with a sinful nature. Emphasize that even though God still loved us before Christ, God viewed our works as filthy rags before we believed in Christ.

### The Way We Are

**#1** - When a person trusts Christ, God transfers the penalty for their sin over to Christ's account and declares them righteous.

**Judge Illustration:** Pretend that someone in the group is caught for burglarizing a house. The judge tries them, finds them guilty, and sentences them to 2 years in jail or \$10,000. Since the person you picked is a student, he is unable to pay the fine and must go to jail. However one of the burglar's friends (someone else in the group) approaches the judge and says he will go to jail for two years in place of his friend. That is what happened when God saved us. Jesus approached God's bench and paid the penalty for our sins. Now we are clean with no marks on our record before God.

**#2** - Redeemed means to buy back or purchase out of the market place. Christ redeemed us when he brought us back from Satan's kingdom by shedding His blood.

**Story of the boy with the toy boat:** There once was a little boy who loved boats. When he was older, he decided to make a model sail boat. He labored for weeks on it, working out every detail of the vessel. Finally, his boat was ready to go on its maiden voyage. While the boy was watching his boat float on a big lake, a strong gust of wind caused the string to come loose from the boat and drift away. The boy was very sad. A few days later he went with his parents to the other side of the lake and entered a toy store. In the window, he saw his boat. He told the store owner that the boat was his, but the man would not believe the boy. The man told him he would have to pay for the boat just like everyone else if he wanted it. For several weeks, the boy worked hard until he finally saved up enough money to buy the boat back. Once the owner of the store took the money and handed the boy the boat, the boy began talking to his little boat. "Now you're mine twice: once because I made you, and once because I bought you." Jesus buys us back to God through his redemption.

**#3** - Eternal life is a present possession the moment we believe.

**Dollar in Book Illustration:** Grab a book and put a dollar in the middle. Close the book and hand it to someone in the group. When that person takes the book they take the dollar with it. The book represents Jesus and the dollar represents eternal life. They go together.

**#4** - God now views us as heirs and beloved children in His kingdom. We inherit everything that Christ has for us (i.e. eternal life, heaven)

### Closing the Lesson:

Open up the sheet and summarize and contrast both sides. This should produce a real clear division between the before and after.

### Evaluation: Use questions at your discretion.

1. How did God view us before we knew Christ?
2. Is it enough to just be trying hard to be a good person? Can that person be considered a Christian?
3. What do you think it means to be reconciled to God? In what ways were we at odds with God before we knew Christ?

\* Many concepts in this study are from *Personal Disciplemaking* by Chris Adsit. Visit [www.cci.org/disciplemakers](http://www.cci.org/disciplemakers) or call 888-342-2235.