

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

I.F.C.A. Meeting (6-26-89), Part 2

Scripture: Selected Scriptures

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Moderator: On the two natures, and this writer asks for a yes or no answer only, is Romans 7 dealing with the struggles of a believer or a nonbeliever?

John MacArthur: A believer.

Moderator: All right. All right, then this question, there's a rather lengthy quote here from your commentary on Ephesians. The quote is as follows. "Biblical terminology, then, does not say that the Christian has two different natures. He has but one nature, the new nature in Christ. The old self dies and the new self lives. They do not coexist. It is not a remaining old nature but the remaining garment of sinful flesh that causes Christians to sin. The Christian is a single new person, a totally new creation, not a spiritual schizophrenic."

In light of this statement, which you have published, how can you be in full agreement and heartily sign the IFCA doctrinal statement, which says we believe that every saved person possesses two natures, with provision made for victory of the new nature over the old nature through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and that all claims to the eradication of the old nature in this life are unscriptural? Would you say that your writing and opinions along this line of thinking are confusing if not contrary to the IFCA position on the two natures?

John MacArthur: No, the reason I can sign the doctrinal statement is because I know what you mean by that. When you say the believer has two natures, I know what you mean to say by that. The only difference that I make is that those are not Biblical terms, and that's the only issue.

I believe in the struggle of Romans chapter 7 as the normal struggle for every believer. But I don't...I choose to use Biblical terminology. Again, it arises out of a study of Romans 6 and 7. Any of you who would want to know the answer to where I stand on this, I have a little book called Freedom From Sin on Romans 6 and 7.

I believe...I can sign the doctrinal statement, let me say it that way, because I believe the intent of everything that is said there. I simply would not use the terms two natures. And I'll give you a...I'll give you an exegetical reason. Those are not used in the Bible.

I'll give you a theological reason. You've got an epistemological problem, or a problem in terminology. If I say that I have an old nature...okay?...what do I mean by that? I'm what? I'm not saved. Okay. If I say when I got saved I got a new nature, how have I just described salvation? What is it? Addition. It isn't addition. It is what?

Response: Regeneration.

John MacArthur: It's transformation. And that is why I don't like the idea...you know, the old deal that you've got two dogs, a black dog and a white dog, who wins?...the one you say, "Sic 'em" to, that kind of theology...I don't like to think of my salvation as here I am, this wretched, corrupt person, and now somewhere in the midst of my wretched, corrupt nature God stuck a new nature.

That doesn't transform me. That is inconsistent with Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ." What is crucifixion an emblem of? Death. I died. What died? My old ego. Nevertheless, I live, a new ego. I am a new creation in Christ. But that new creation is incarcerated in unredeemed flesh.

That's why in Romans 8 he's crying out, saying, "We wait for the redemption of our" what? Of our body. And by body he doesn't just mean the physical body. All of the bodily appetites that are in your mind and your emotions and your will, all unredeemed humanness in which is incarcerated the new creation.

And there is the conflict, the new creation, which is a transformed inner person. That's why Paul says in Romans 7, "In the inner man, I delight in the law of God." Right? "But I have this principle in me of sin." I see that. I just don't like to call it two natures, because it makes salvation look like addition rather than transformation, and it forces people to deal with terms they can't find in the Bible.

And so when I teach my people, I try to always use Biblical terms. In Romans 8, what would it say? It would have to read like this. "We wait for the elimination of our old nature." It doesn't say that. "We wait for the transformation of our body to match the transformation of that inner part of us."

Now, I don't want to get too technical in splitting that all up, because that gets real deep, and it's way beyond me. The new birth is still a mystery. But I just like to use Biblical terms. So I don't have any problem signing that, because what the statement intends to say is that you have a principle of new life, a principle of sin, at war with each other in the believer. It's just what you call them.

And I would rather use Biblical terms, as I try to, in carefully going through Romans 6 and 7, than to just simply call them two natures. That's okay, and Randy Showers has a good little book in which he redefines natures in such a way that I can accept that. But I'd rather stick with the Biblical terminology.

He calls...I think he calls nature a predisposition, and that's fine. I don't have any problem with that. But I'd rather talk about sin that is in me...where?...that is in my flesh, my unredeemed humanness. Just use Paul's terms. Then when people go back to the Bible and they read it, they say, "Oh, yeah, I remember that. That fits what I heard." So it's just terminology.

Moderator: Any questions from the panel on the two natures?

Harold Freeman: Yes.

Moderator: Harold Freeman?

Harold Freeman: John, are you familiar with Buswell's definition of a nature?

John MacArthur: I'm not sure. James Buswell?

Harold Freeman: Yes. He calls a nature a complex of attributes.

John MacArthur: Yeah. That's good.

Harold Freeman: And if you use nature in that way, you would be right at home with the word nature.

John MacArthur: Sure. Sure. I...

Harold Freeman: Because, now, just a word that is Biblical, you're not uncomfortable with Trinity.

John MacArthur: Right.

Harold Freeman: You use that. But that's not a Biblical term.

John MacArthur: Right.

Harold Freeman: But it's Biblical truth.

John MacArthur: It's Biblical truth. Sure.

Harold Freeman: So, with regard to the nature, if a nature is truly a complex of attributes, we have the attributes of humanness.

John MacArthur: I have no problem with that. I would agree with that.

Harold Freeman: In that struggle in Romans 7. Right?

John MacArthur: Thank you for helping me. That's good. As a complex of attributes, or as, like I mentioned earlier, a disposition which is composed of all those...sure. I have no problem with that at all. I would believe that. Good.

Moderator: George?

George: A question that may be helpful to me would be, I'm sure you're familiar with the book Birthright by David...

John MacArthur: Mm-hmm.

George: David Needham. Would you be comfortable with his position in the light of the book? Could the book join the IFCA comfortably?

John MacArthur: Needham's book is really just sort of a regripping of Martyn Lloyd-Jones' view, which is pretty much a historic view. I don't know whether he could join the IFCA. I guess I'm trying to find that out today, you know, in my own case. But I'm not sure what you all would tolerate in terms of terminology.

But I...the book goes a little too far for me, just in general. I'm a little uncomfortable with some of the implications of making the division too strong. And I think he fragments the believer into too clear a division. I'm a little uncomfortable with that.

But I'm certain that both he and Martyn Lloyd-Jones, from whom he drew most of that material, would affirm the sinfulness of the believer, that there is a real entity of sin within the life of the believer. But I think he goes a little bit far in making the division and distinction.

Moderator: Okay. Thank you. Now we move into the final category, which we want to spend the rest of the...of our time on, salvation. And the first question, John, is, could you explain your motive and intent behind writing the book, The Gospel According to Jesus?

John MacArthur: Well, I mean, that's a hard question to answer without sounding a little self-serving or pious. But I have to tell you, I felt like a man under compulsion. It's hard to assess motive. You know, I'd like to think all my motives were pure.

I don't think it was financial. Patricia and I devoted all that God has given us from that book back into the Lord's work, so it hasn't brought any money to us. I don't think it was...I don't think I was trying to confuse the church.

But I wrote that book...let me give you just a brief statement of background. When I was in high school, I had a very dear friend, played on our baseball team, played on our football team. We were buddies. He played first base, I played shortstop. He played a backup quarterback position and I was a tailback and we were close. He was...his father was real active in a church group, and of course my father was a pastor. We did a lot of personal evangelism in those days, and we'd go down to Pershing Square in LA and witness.

And Ralph went away to Redlands University. I saw him after his second year after I had been in college. And I was so glad to see him. And he said, "John, something's changed." I said, "What?" He said, "I'm an atheist." I was shocked. I said, "What do you mean you're an atheist?" He said, "I don't believe in God. I don't believe any of that blankety blank stuff in the Bible." And I just didn't have a category in my theology to put him in at that point.

I went away to college. I had a very, very similar experience with a number of guys that I knew who named the name of Christ at one point in time and who abandoned Christ. The guy that sticks in my mind most of all, I was...my senior year at college he was my running mate in the backfield. He was a great football player. We had great times together.

He was a youth pastor on the weekends. He taught the college Sunday School class in a Presbyterian church and I taught the college Sunday School class for my dad. We always compared notes. And he graduated. I went on to seminary. He went on to get a Ph.D. in psychology, went to teach at Cal State University in Long Beach, and I picked up the Times one day to find out that he had brought nude students onto the...into the classroom and was demonstrating sexual stuff in front of the whole class.

He was defrocked, kicked out of the school. Found out he was selling drugs on the side. He wound up with a seven-year prison sentence. You know, when you play football with a guy for three years, you get close. He was student body president, I was vice president. His father was a pastor, a good friend of my dad's. To this day, he denies Christ.

I went away to seminary. The son of a dean of my seminary married a Buddhist and set up a Buddhist altar in his house after graduating from Talbot Seminary. I struggled through a lot of that kind of stuff. Then I went to a church, and I baptized a guy who was a porno filmmaker, and within two months he was back making porno films.

And as a pastor I have seen them come and go and come and go and come and go, and trying in my own heart to assess the nature of true conversion was very much a personal struggle with me, not a theological one. And then I began to study the Gospel of Matthew, and I preached in Matthew for eight years at our church.

And in that process of going through Matthew, I began to come to grips with the whole gospel record, because I was doing a study of the synoptics and John at the same time. And I began to fix on how Jesus evangelized and what He called for and so forth.

And, born out of that, I began to look at the church at large. I began to look, for one thing, at the charismatic movement, which, I say this with compassion in my heart, has been, without question, the most disruptive, disastrous thing that's happened to the church in the last 50 years. It has devastated the church in America in a number of ways. I wish I had time to go into them.

And then coming behind it this psychological salvation stuff. The combination of this has created the illusion of salvation in our society. I'm not trying to...I'm not trying to make people insecure. I'm just trying to make sure there aren't some people thinking they're on their way to heaven who are going to wake up in hell and fulfill Matthew 7:21-23 and say, "Lord, Lord, what about us?" That, to me, is the most frightening passage in all of Scripture.

It'd be one thing to go to hell and know you were going there. It'd be one thing to go to hell and not expect anything different. It'd be another thing to go to hell and wonder why you got there when you thought you were a Christian. I just don't want any responsibility in my life, or any irresponsibility with regard to that doctrine.

So that's really what motivated me, through the years just going over that and trying to deal with the reality of that issue. And then watching people who name the name of Christ but their life is the same.

One very moving experience, I was with the president of a seminary and we were driving along, and we passed a liquor store. It was all glass, and it was lit on the inside with lights in the middle that shot through all the liquor and through the windows, too, at night. It looked like a diamond.

I said, "That is unbelievable. Look at all that liquor." And he said, "Wow, yeah." He said, "There's a lot of those stores in our city and they're owned by a guy in my Sunday School class." I think I mentioned it in the book. I said, "You've got to be kidding me." He says, "Oh, he's in the class."

And I said, "Has he been there a long time?" "Yeah, he's been there several years." I said, "Is this guy a Christian?" He said, "Yeah, he's a Christian. He owns these stores all around the city." And I said, "Well, doesn't anybody confront him about this?" "No." I said, "Well, has it ever entered your mind that this guy might not be a Christian?" And to which he replied, "Well, I remember the day he walked the aisle."

And then he said to me this, rather pensively, he said, "Yeah, there's one thing that bothers me about him, though. He's been living with this girl who's not his wife for about two years." This is a seminary president. I'm saying, "Wait a minute." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation" has got to mean something. I'm not legalistic, but I do believe in transformation.

So that was really what was behind it. That conversation overwhelmed me. And I just felt like maybe I need to put some of this stuff together. So I didn't know I'd get in so much trouble, to be honest with you. And I don't have a martyr complex. But I believe passionately in what I wrote in that book. In fact, I'm right in the process of writing a sequel, *The Gospel According to the Apostles*, because it's identical. As you would expect.

Moderator: Another question here, then, John. If I were an unsaved man coming to you today in desperate need of salvation, and were to ask you how I can receive eternal life, what would you tell me? How much would I have to understand concerning Christ to get saved? Please give the Scripture you would use.

John MacArthur: Well, you'd have to understand who Christ is. I mean, you can't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved unless you know who the Lord Jesus Christ is. You would have to understand that He is God in human flesh who came into the world to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, and that He accomplished the atonement on the cross, paying the penalty for your sins, and thus allowing God to grant forgiveness to those who put their faith in Him. So you'd have to explain Christ.

And then it would be a question of believing in Him. The issue is, what do we mean by believe. Do you believe that Jesus came into the world, God in human flesh? Yes. Do you believe that Jesus died on a cross and rose again the third day? Yes. Do you believe Jesus died as a substitute for your sins? Yes. Is he saved? Not necessarily. I believe all that. So do the devils. James 2...they tremble.

Something else...there's got to be some content in this believing. Jesus said, you know, that He didn't commit Himself to people who believed in Him. Many believed on Him, but He didn't commit Himself to them because He knew what was in their hearts. Remember that?

So the first question I try to ask in the book is what is the nature of saving faith. What is it that sets saving faith apart from non-saving faith? I am sure that every person in this room would affirm that there is such a thing as a non-saving kind of belief. Right? I mean, the Catholics will sign on the dotted line everything in the life of Christ, His death, His resurrection. That doesn't save them. What does?

Well, somehow saving faith has to have some components. Let me suggest the components to you. Component number one, saving faith forsakes all human means of salvation. Listen to the Apostle Paul. Acts 9 was the history of his conversion. Philippians 3 is his heart attitude. Do you want to know what Paul was feeling on the Damascus road? Read Philippians 3. What does he say there?

He says, "I was circumcised the eighth day. I was of the nation Israel. I was of the tribe of Benjamin. I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews. As to the law, a Pharisee. As to zeal, persecuting the church. As to the righteousness which is contained in the law, I was" what? "Blameless." I mean, that's some heavy-duty credentials.

What was all that stuff to him? That was all in his asset column. That was all profit. These things I counted as gain first, right? This was all my...this is my assets. Why? Because his hope of salvation was in those. Salvation by race. Salvation by ritual. Circumcision. Salvation by rank. Tribe of Benjamin, one of the highest-ranking of all tribes. I mean, they got the territory in which Jerusalem existed. They were the only son born in the Promised Land, and on and on it goes.

And then he says, "I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews." What do you mean? "I'm a Hebrew son of Hebrew parents. I kept the tradition. I kept the language. I kept the customs. I got it all. And when it comes to zeal, you want to see a sincere believer in God, I killed the opponents of the old covenant. I killed the opponents of salvation, as I understood it. That's how zealous, sincere I am." The guy had it all.

And as to the law, blameless from the human viewpoint. They couldn't hold anything on me. I kept the law. I was a Pharisee, strict, loyal. Six thousand Pharisees, that's all there were at that time. He was one of those, that small, little elite group.

So he says, "That's all in my asset column. And I hoped in my salvation for that. And then I met Christ on the Damascus Road." And you can believe this, he already knew the facts of Christ. Right? And he already knew what the gospel preachers were preaching. That's why he was persecuting them.

But of all a sudden, he met Jesus Christ, and what he saw was skubalon, rubbish, excrement. And he trashed it. And what does that say? That says that salvation comes to someone who turns his back on any confidence in the flesh whatsoever. Paul says, "I counted it rubbish. It was gain to me. I counted it as loss." He doesn't say, "Well, it was nice, but it wasn't adequate." He says it was excrement. That's the word "skubalon."

Why? You say to be a Jew, to be from Benjamin's tribe, to be...why was it such a vile thing? I'll tell you why. Not because in itself it's wicked, but because when you trust it for salvation, it'll damn your soul. That's the issue. So he says, "I counted it all lost in order that I might gain Christ. And what did

I gain? The knowledge of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the power of Christ, the fellowship of Christ in His sufferings and the glory of Christ in the resurrection to come." That's the exchange.

You say, "Is that taught in the Gospels?" Absolutely. What did Jesus say in Matthew 16? "What will a man give in exchange for his" what? See, Paul had to make an exchange. He had to give up all of the stuff he was trusting to trust only in Christ.

That's exactly what Jesus meant in the pearl of the treasure and the...in the parable of the treasure and the pearl. When the guy found the treasure, he sold everything he had and took the treasure. When he found the pearl, he sold everything he had and took the pearl. It is an exchange of all that I have trusted in for my salvation for Christ. It's all rubbish. So the first thing about saving faith is it has no confidence in the flesh. It is by pure grace, though faith, plus or minus nothing.

The second element in it is, and I believe you must affirm this to a person, is that it involves a turning from sin. How can anyone argue with that when that's what Jesus preached? Repent. And that's what John preached. Repent. And that's what Paul preached. We preach repentance for God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 20. It's repent. Repent.

Now, I know people say it means a change of mind about who Christ is. I don't believe that. I mean it is a conscious recognition that I am a sinner and I am turning from my sin to a savior. I think that is just all through Scripture.

And then I believe there's one more element of that saving faith, and that is it is a commitment. It is an entrusting of my life to the lordship of Christ. Now, let me say this. I believe that you are turning from all confidence in the flesh. You are turning from sin to a Savior who can forgive your sin, and you are committing your life to the care of a sovereign Lord.

Now, let me say this. I do not believe that at the moment of salvation you or anybody else fully understands all the implications of that kind of thing. And I'll tell you right now, you may not understand it a few years after your salvation, because it's an ever-increasing awareness of what that meant.

But you say, "Well, is that a human work, to turn from your flesh?" No. "Is it a human work to repent?" No. "Is it a human work to submit?" No. That is the divine work. It's God who produces the loss of confidence in the flesh. It's God who produces the repentance. It's God who grants repentance. It says in the Book of Acts, God granted the Gentiles repentance.

Are you willing to turn from anything that you're trusting for your salvation and trust only in Jesus Christ? Are you willing to turn from your sin, commit it to Him, ask Him to cleanse your life, and are you willing to follow Him? What did Jesus say? "Make a decision for me?" No. He said, "Follow

me." Continuity.

That's how I would give...I just did...that's the way I would give the message. And I don't think everybody understands the full implications of it. The second thing that I try to point out in the book...the first is the nature of saving faith...the second is the nature of conversion.

What I'm trying to discuss in the book is, what is conversion? If you tell me conversion is where you get saved but don't change, I've got a problem. Because I don't understand that that's what the Bible teaches. So maybe we need to talk about that. That'll probably come up.

Moderator: Okay. The second question here, does not your book, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, add to the essence of the pure gospel of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ alone in the same way as those believing in baptismal regeneration do when they say you must be baptized? If we're going to add discipleship, why not baptism as an additional condition, because the Scripture says, "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins"?

John MacArthur: Well, for one thing, repent comes before. But obviously not. I believe in salvation by grace through faith. The issue is what does God do in a person when He saves him?

Listen. My doctrine of salvation is as simple as this. You can't save yourself. Nobody can save you. Only God can save you. You cannot turn from the flesh. You are dead in trespasses and sin. You cannot repent. You cannot believe. You cannot submit. You cannot follow. You cannot do anything. Only God can do that. And God has to save you.

You say, "Well, isn't my will involved?" Yeah, because He changes your will. So we're not talking about some human work here, folks. We're all on our way to the pit forever if God doesn't reach down in sovereign grace and redeem us, pick us up. And how the mystery of the human will fits in is God's to understand.

But I know this, that were it not for a sovereign, gracious God, who reached down and not only gave me faith and repentance and a willing heart but jerked me out of my sin, I would never be saved. Nothing to do with anything I would do. Totally the sovereign, gracious work of Almighty God. So I don't...I believe in salvation by grace plus, minus absolutely nothing. Even faith is a gift from God.

Moderator: Would you give us your definition of the following terms, and I think you already have some of these, and state their relationship to saving faith? Would you also put them in the chronological order as they relate to your salvation theology? Repentance, faith, believe and discipleship.

John MacArthur: Well, repentance, faith and believe, that's a package. Repentance is an element of saving faith. Faith and belief is the same thing. Discipleship is a result. When I became a Christian...what is disciple? Mathetes. I mean, what does Jesus tell us to do? Go into all the world and do what? Make disciples.

I mean, what are we arguing about? What are we arguing about? What does mathetes mean? Learner. That's all it means. Don't get in some big grandiose deal about what a disciple is. It just means a learner.

But I'll tell you something right now. If you try to go back to the Gospels and take the term "disciple" and say that all Christians aren't disciples, for example, like Zane Hodges would do, and put discipleship in some second-level category, you've got major problems. But that's what they have to do if they want us to hold that other view.

Because when Jesus called disciples to Himself, He said, you know, "If you're not willing to leave your father and mother and so forth and so on and take up your cross and follow me, you can't be my disciple." He called for pretty strong commitment. And people get nervous and say, "Oh, that's too much work."

Don't you understand? He called for it and He produced it. Don't you understand that they couldn't do that either? That's sovereignty. What He called for only He could produce. So what's the difference what He called for?

But the point is, disciples...if you say that Jesus was calling already believing people to higher levels of commitment, now you have totally transformed the whole ministry of Jesus. He is not an evangelist. He has not come to seek and to save that which was lost. He is a Keswick speaker. And his entire role in the world is to find carnal Christians and elevate them. That is not what Jesus came to do. He came to make disciples. He...look at John 4. What does the Father seek? True what?

Response: Worshippers.

John MacArthur: Worshippers. Is that any different than a learner or a disciple? No. Is that second-level, too? Are we saved and then somewhere along the line we learn to worship God? Are we saved and then somewhere along the line we learn to love God?

It's a package deal. Whatever the Lord does is complete, and so He produces the repentance in...mixed with the faith. I'm not into this...you know, don't get me into the sublapsarian, infralapsarian, supralapsarian, Labrador retriever controversy, because I don't even want to get into that. I don't know what comes first. I just know that there's a package there, and what comes out of the producing of faith and salvation is a heart that desires God.

I read a book this week on the flight, and in it it said, "At the heart of every Christian is a person angry with God." What kind of a statement is that? I don't know what in the world he's talking about. I'm not angry with God. At the heart of every Christian is somebody who wants to love God. Because that's what God produces, so he becomes a learner. That's all a disciple is.

But there's a willingness, I think, initially, to commit our life. We don't...we don't understand the full implications, and our flesh gets in the way. I'll leave it at that. By the way, you have this little thing called "This We Believe." That's an IFCA thing, revised by Wright Van Plew, Robert Minierd, Roger Campbell, L. Samuel Marcht, and George Zeller, and in it, it says...I don't know...I know Wright Van Plew...it says, "Not everyone who professes Christ actually possesses Christ. Some people profess Christ, but by their works, they deny Him.

"Some name the name of Christ, but they do not depart from iniquity. With their lips, they say they know Christ, but they are found to be liars. It is therefore needful for each professing believer to examine himself to see whether or not he has truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ." I don't think I'm too far off where all you people are.

Moderator: Now, please, I asked for no displays of disapproval or approval with this question.

John MacArthur: I appreciate it. Thank you very much. It says, "The Bible clearly reveals certain marks which should characterize every child of God. Some of these are as follows: The true believer, one, believes the Word of God. Two, hungers for the Word of God. Three, loves the brethren. Four, obeys God's commands. Five, performs good works," and it gives Scripture to support that. "Six, does not continue in sin, but lives a righteous life."

That's all I'm saying. And if it isn't there, you have every reason to ask whether the person is a true Christian. I'm not trying to take somebody's assurance away. I'm trying to take somebody's false assurance away.

Moderator: Two questions here that...in your understanding, what is the difference of salvation and sanctification? Along with that, what is the relationship or contribution of obedience to justification and sanctification?

John MacArthur: Well, obedience makes no contribution to justification except the obedience of faith. Paul talks about Romans 1, the obedience of faith. That's the only element in justification. But in sanctification, obedience is the catalyst in the process of spiritual growth. And, again, I believe that that obedience is prompted by the Spirit of God. But the first part of that question was, "Distinguish between salvation and sanctification?"

Moderator: Yes.

John MacArthur: Well, I think salvation, as a term, embodies sanctification. There are three kinds of sanctification. We could say there is instantaneous sanctification, when you are set apart unto God at the moment of salvation. There is progressive sanctification, when you grow to be more like Jesus Christ, pursuing the prize. And there is ultimate sanctification, when you are, in total, made like Christ, in the future.

And I don't think that salvation can be even discussed without discussing the whole process of salvation from beginning to its completion. And remember in Romans 13, where Paul says, "Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed." What was he talking about? You mean there is a salvation that we're still waiting for and getting nearer to? Yes, because salvation is not complete. My salvation is not complete. Is yours? I'm waiting for the redemption of my body. Then it will be complete.

So, you can't even talk about salvation without talking about progressive sanctification and ultimate sanctification. That's why in Romans, when Paul starts talking about salvation, in chapter 3, he has to talk about sanctification in chapters 6, 7 and 8 because the package comes together.

So, yes, I believe in the sanctification as an inherent part of...I do not believe in justification apart from sanctification. I do not believe that God has the power to save you, but can't make you grow for some reason or can't transform you inside. Okay?

Moderator: Go back to a previous question and ask your definition...you talked about the term "disciple," but the term that they wanted was "discipleship."

John MacArthur: Well, you just want me to define that? That's just the process of learning, the process of developing from the point of salvation toward Christ-likeness, being a learner. And who's the teacher? It says it. "Go and make disciples." How do you do that? "Baptizing and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." That's discipling. Win somebody to Christ, teach them everything Jesus wanted them to know. That's discipleship.

Moderator: Okay.

John MacArthur: And if you want to talk about the process of discipleship, from my standpoint as a person, I would say when you disciple someone you simply win the person to Christ and then teach them how to live a godly life. And you don't do it with books and articles and curriculum.

You do it by getting along side of them and building a deeply spiritual friendship in which they learn to follow the way you respond to life in a godly fashion. That's true discipleship. It's walking through the

world holding their spiritual hand and showing them how to confront life in a way that will honor Christ, teaching them spiritual living.

Moderator: All right. This question, in your reaction to easy believism, why do you accuse the fundamentalists of our day of preaching a gospel which does not require a permanent transformation of life?

John MacArthur: Because I believe that many people are preaching that kind of gospel. Again, I would say that if you don't think that, then you haven't been listening to the charismatic preachers on TV. You have to wonder whether they've experienced any kind of real transformation. But I think we've gotten into this invitationalism.

I mean, just go back and read Finney. Go back and read Charles G. Finney. Don't just take, you know, good illustrations out of a book that somebody quoted Finney. Go back and read Finney if you want to know where this stuff starts in our culture, and find out where he's coming from with this invitationalism and the "anxious bench," as he called it. At the end of his life, he said, "It seemed to have been my lot in life to have produced many temporary converts." That's what he said about his life, because he was into a method.

That's very dangerous today. Because, as Marshall McLuhan said, "The medium has become the message." And we are fast producing in the church the exercise of methods without content. Just proclaiming the truth clearly. All I want to do, you know...I remember the Apostle Paul when he went and he met that lady, Lydia. It says, "When he preached the truth, God opened her heart," "whose heart the Lord opened." All I want to do is preach the simple, powerful truth of the Word and let God open the hearts.

But I think if you just manipulate people...I think that comes right out of Finney. There's some fascinating stuff on him if you read it carefully. And we got into an invitationalistic kind of system today where we get people to do things on the outside because of one kind of pressure or another or intimidation or emotion, and they haven't really carefully assessed on the inside what's going on, and God may not be producing what is happening. You have to be very careful.

Do you know, Jonathan Edwards read his sermons in a monotone? And he did that because he was afraid that someone might respond to his technique rather than to truth. And they said in the Great Awakening that halfway through his messages, people were crying for mercy from God. Why? Because they lived in a cognitive age. They lived in an age when they responded to thought.

We live in an age when people respond to feeling. Do you understand the difference between a typographic printed page communication age and a telegraphic, photographic communication age? Read the little book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, by Neal Postman. It'll change your ministry. Neal

Postman. He's not a Christian. But he says, "We were a typographic age and we read, and print freezes thoughts, and as soon as you freeze a thought, you can analyze it, you can compare it, you can evaluate it, you can think about it. And that's why we could think."

That's why in the Lincoln-Douglas debates for the presidency, two men stood toe-to-toe for seven hours before a huge crowd and debated socioeconomic and political theory. Compare that with the Bush-Dukakis campaign. All you remember...you don't remember if anybody knew anything about anything theoretical or political. All you know is that somebody gunked up Boston Harbor and you didn't vote for him. That was a 30-second commercial. You saw a picture of crud in a corner of a harbor, and all it wasn't...it wasn't designed to appeal to your mind.

I haven't seen a candidate in years who was designed to appeal to anybody's mind. You can't get elected doing that. You appeal to their emotion. Why? Because we live in a telegraphic, photographic society where people don't read. They watch a tube and they see pictures, and none of it is designed to make them think. It's all designed to make them feel.

So, I mean, look at the news, even. You think those people are great social theorists? Are you kidding me? They're talking hairdos. They're on there for one reason. They can read a script, look believable, and smile at the same time. And nothing lasts more than 30 seconds and it just goes flying by and you just get emotionally jerked from one thing to the next. And you get that thing in your hand and you just keep jerking that thing around. Your emotions are flying in every direction.

It's that kind of culture we live in, and if we don't be careful, we're going to fall into the trap of appealing to people's emotion rather than having them think carefully and deeply about the things of God. It's a tough one today. I'll tell you right now it's tough.

I'm in Southern California. Big entertainment, right? I come in there on Sunday, "Open your Bibles," and I stand there trying to keep the attention of these people who've been blasted from pillar to post emotionally by the television and entertainment all week long. How are they going to think? It's very difficult.

So I think we're in a very dangerous age, more dangerous than even Finney's age, because we're more susceptible to the emotional kind of things, and I think we have to hold out for clear presentation of the truth.

Moderator: To clarify something here, John...

John MacArthur: That was a long answer to a short question.

Moderator: The writer of this question apparently feels that you have accused fundamentalists, those that sign the same doctrinal statement you sign, that believe the same thing that you believe, of preaching a gospel which does not require permanent transformation.

John MacArthur: I don't accuse anybody of doing that in the book. I just say it's being done. You know it's being done, I know it's being done. You know as well as I do that there are grossly inadequate presentations of the gospel being made.

Can I give you an encouraging thought? Do you realize that even an incomplete presentation of the gospel will not keep the elect from getting saved? Do you realize that? God's going to save His people. You just don't want to make the non-elect think they are, or the people who aren't yet saved think they are.

You say, "Why?" Because it's so disastrous for the church and for Christian testimony, and for the...it's a reproach on Christ. But I don't accuse any individuals. I don't blanket anything. Some preach the true and faithful gospel and some, I think, preach a shallow gospel.

Moderator: All right, the next question then. You state several times in your book, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, that saving faith is an exchange of all that we are for all that Christ is.

John MacArthur: Right.

Moderator: Now, such wording seems contrary to the Bible's emphasis that salvation is a free gift of God, not something involving an exchange of anything. Please comment.

John MacArthur: Matthew 16:26, "What will a man give in exchange for his soul?" You'd better exchange all of you for all of Him. What can I say? Jesus said that. "What will you give in exchange for your soul?" "What does it profit you if gain" what? "The whole world" and what? You'd better give up the whole world.

What did Paul say? "I counted it all gain once. Then I saw Christ...it's trash." He trashed it all. All that means is that I give up all my confidence in myself and my own human resources and I embrace Christ. Isn't that what salvation is?

I love...my favorite definition of a Christian is Philippians 3:3. I don't know if anybody else sees that as a definition of a Christian. It's my favorite one. He says, "We are the true circumcision," that's the circumcised in heart, and here are the three things that distinguish us. "We worship in the Spirit of God, we glory"...kauchaomai, rejoice, boast..."in Christ Jesus alone, and we put no confidence" what? Isn't that good? How can you tell a true Christian? I'll tell you. He worships God, puts all his trust in Christ, and has no confidence in his flesh. That's it.

Moderator: Next question then. In your chapter, he challenges an "eager seeker," which you claim is a significant salvation passage. It indicates that a person must be willing to give up everything before he can be saved. In the parable of the good Samaritan, Luke 10:25, a similar question was asked, but this time a different answer was given. It speaks of a love for God and love for man. What is the gospel, a willingness to give up possessions or a love for God and man, or now both so we have three conditions if we add faith?

John MacArthur: No, it's a submission to Christ and it's a willingness to submit to Christ whatever He asks. That's all. It's a willing to give up all your confidence in your flesh, all your confidence in your own resources. See, that was the issue with the rich young ruler. It wasn't...the point there wasn't Jesus says, "If you give away all your money, you can be saved." The point is, you've got to be willing to relinquish everything in which you have placed your trust, and place your trust only in Christ.

Folks, that is submission. You're literally...you're literally trashing everything you have hoped in and nakedly saying, "I take Christ." That's an exchange. That's got to be an exchange. And that's really what I'm trying to say.

Moderator: Okay. The next question, why is it that the Gospel of John speaks of saving faith in the context of only believing, while discipleship and lordship are left out completely? And there are several references here: John 1:12, 3:16, 3:36.

John MacArthur: Sure. The way to answer that is that you have to ask the question, what is believing, and we already did that. Believing, true faith has some components in it. I mean, read that question again, just from the beginning.

Moderator: Why is it that the Gospel of John speaks of saving faith in the context of only believing...

John MacArthur: Okay, stop at that point. Saving faith is only believing. Well, let me turn to whoever asked that question and say, "Okay, you tell me what that believing means," and you will have to give that believing some definition, right? It can't be the same as James 2:19 believing, the devils. It can't be the same as believing and "Jesus didn't commit Himself to them" kind of believing. So what kind of believing is it?

It's got to have some components in it. And since it's a gift of God, not of works, even the faith is a gift of God. Then let's look and see what components God gives to one who believes. And I believe He grants repentance and He grants a submissive heart and one that has no confidence in the flesh. It's the components of that believing.

Moderator: The latter part of this question, John, was why is it that Paul identifies the gospel he preached apart from the inclusion of any reference to discipleship, I Corinthians 15:1-4 and Ephesians 2:8-9?

John MacArthur: Well, he's just talking about the gospel from a factual viewpoint. He's not talking about the believer in addition to that. I mean, you...that particular issue of discipleship is not in focus when you look at the work of Christ.

If you were to go beyond the gospel, say, in I Corinthians 15, and look at the product of the gospel, the person, then you would get into the discipleship aspect. But the bottom line is, my sakes, every single epistle Paul wrote was geared to discipleship, every one of them.

By the way, we've talked about the fact that I Corinthians 15, you can't necessarily make that an all-inclusive statement. It doesn't mention the blood of Christ there either. There are some other features in the work of Christ that are not mentioned there that you certainly don't want to argue from the standpoint of silence.

Moderator: This final question, then we'll open it up to the panel, can children get saved with no knowledge of Christ's lordship?

John MacArthur: Nobody can be saved with no knowledge of Christ's lordship, if you mean by that, do they have to know He's Lord. You have to understand who Christ is to be saved, right? And He's Lord. I mean, you can't...you can't say, "Well, I take Him as Savior, but not as Lord." You don't have that right. You're not redefining Him. He is who He is.

Now, if you're saying, by the question, can a child be saved if they don't understand the full implications of that lordship on their life? Yes, because I don't think any of us understood the full implications.

But I think, I know in my own four little...I have four children who all love Christ and they are a joy to my heart. I praise God every day for the fact that they have, to this day, been obedient to the Savior all through their lives. And in leading these little ones to Christ, there was always the sense of sinfulness, there was always the sense of wanting to follow Jesus and be obedient, there was always the sense that "I haven't been living right" and "things aren't right in my heart and I want to be right and I want to obey God." And it was always there.

And at whatever point of understanding a child is, if they can understand who Jesus was, what He did, and that they're turning from sin to follow Christ in obedience, that's the simple truth any child can understand. They don't understand the full implications of that, as I said, but they can understand the idea and the basic thought.

Moderator: I'm sorry, there was one more question. If a person would accept Christ as his Savior and not as his Lord, could he go to heaven?

John MacArthur: That question doesn't even make sense, because you can't accept Christ as Savior without accepting Him as Lord because that's who He is. Roman 10:9-10, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, thou shalt be saved." The argument is not with me. As Bob Jones used to say, "If you don't like that thought, call up heaven. I didn't invent it."

Confessing Jesus as Lord is what you have to do to be saved. You can't separate that out. I think people, in fairness to some who asked these questions, I think people are loading, are preloading this concept of Lord, with too much baggage. It simply means, "I turn from my sin, I turn from my confidence, I want my sin forgiven, and I'm willing to follow you." That's what we're talking about. It seems those are all terms that are used in the New Testament.

So, don't load the lordship concept up too much. I think there is a sorrow over sin and a willingness to follow Christ, and boy, He made it as strong as He could make it. He said, "If you're not willing to leave father and mother, take up your cross, follow me, you can't be my disciple." That's pretty strong language.

So when it comes to adulthood...by the way, there's no illustration at all in the New Testament of any childhood conversion, ever, so you have no basic text to go to on a child's situation, but with adults, He made it strong. He made it strong because He wanted the people to clearly understand that it was a break with the old and it was a walk in the new. And what was involved, they needed to understand.

Moderator: Any questions from the panel on salvation?

Panel Member: I have a question and a comment. First of all, John, personally I want to thank you for your gracious spirit and your thoughtful ministry over the years and for coming today. Secondly, it's interesting, this last comment. I had written down some things.

I was saved as a child. I think probably the majority of the people that are born again are born again in their earlier years and do not understand a great deal about anything. But I know when I was saved I feared hell, and I knew I needed salvation. And, as you've just explained, my experience was, and it was very vivid, it was turning from sin to the one who is my Savior. And I knew little about lordship. If somebody would have used the term, I would have been lost.

Now, I know the Bible's written to adults, but, as you have already expressed, it seems as though, as we get into the Word, we begin to understand more fully. And probably a great deal of our concern is

involved in the clichés that developed. Lordship salvation doesn't make sense.

John MacArthur: I don't like that term. I never use that term.

Panel Member: No, it's a poor term.

John MacArthur: It's a terrible term.

Panel Member: I would like for you, and my comment is, would you comment on John 8:31? I know you have. It's in your writings with all the rest. But it ties in with the discipleship and the believing aspect.

John MacArthur: Right. Well, He says in John 8:31-32, "Many believed on His name, but He said to them, 'If you continue in my Word, then you are my mathetes alethos, you are my real disciple.'" And what He was simply saying there is that if true salvation has occurred as a result of true faith, "you'll continue in the Word. You'll continue to walk following me, doing the things that I've commanded."

Not perfectly. Please note this. That becomes the direction of your life, not the perfection of your life. And I think that's what He's saying right there. And, of course, what was their reaction? They say, "Well, we've never, you know, been servant to any man and..." And He says, "Boy, you've got a short memory," and reminded them of their past.

But the point there was that true disciples are those who continue in the Word, and I think that's a salvation point. I think that's the whole idea. That's exactly what John is saying. If you're really the child of God, you're not going to continue in the same, unbroken pattern of sin.

I understand that somebody's coming out with a new book called, Can A Carnal Christian Go To Heaven? Did you see that advertised? Was it advertised in Moody or something? Can a Carnal Christian Go To Heaven? Any Christian can go to heaven. There are only two kinds, carnal and spiritual. But I don't believe those are two permanent categories. I think they're simply two different elements of everyone's spiritual life.

When I walk in the Spirit, I'm spiritual. When I feed the flesh, I'm fleshy. People say, "You deny carnal Christianity." No, I don't. I just don't think carnal Christianity is category 1 that you live in permanently because you never accepted Jesus as Lord, whatever that means. I think carnal Christianity is when you walk in the flesh, Galatians 5. And when you walk in the Spirit, that's spiritual Christianity. And the only time you grow is when you're spiritual, so your spiritual maturity is the accumulated result of the moments of your true spirituality.

Moderator: Any other question from the panel? Dr. Madison?

Dr. Madison: I would like to ask a question, and it may not be _____, John, but make some observations before we ask the question. As you know, John has been with us at Calvary for an excellent conference system through the years and we've had tremendous, I think, respect for one another. We have had great blessings come to men there. And I think before our coming to Calvary, I pastored a church...two churches for 18 years...I've been at Calvary fifteen years...I'm seeing things from a little different perspective now.

As a pastor, I had quite a few immature sheep, probably most of them, John. Coming to Calvary, I think we have a great group of students there. Of course, the best campus, even, it's better than Masters, but we won't go into that right now. But even some of the best of those mature ones are quite quick to be the authorities, and they're coming to me regularly and saying, "Do you know Dr. So-and-So said this? This is what he believes."

So this has resulted in having what we call faculty meetings and discussion times. They prove very helpful, for we cannot have a school and, I think, put a straitjacket on any man. We must give them liberty to develop the Word of God in a certain way. But there are certain bounds they must have.

We have a doctrinal statement at Calvary, a very detailed one, basically the same as the IFCA. But that doesn't include every basic concept taught in every course in theology. So what we'll do as a faculty is set a circle, and we've done this many times, here's a circle and we'll go around the room and ask those faculty members, "Are you inside this circle? Are you inside these bounds?"

And the vast majority of the time, they say they are. And we don't seek to be the one that determines, "No, you're not." If they consciously say, "I'm inside that circle. I am content in your doctrinal statement," we don't hound them. Nor do we allow a student to just say, "I know who said so-and-so." We go to them personally.

Up to this point, John, I really appreciated the fact, I think you have very consciously signed our doctrinal statement. And I look at your church, your influence, and so forth. I really don't think you need us. You know, you probably would survive us if we say, "John, we're not going to keep you here, you heretic."

So my only question is, rather than going through this repeatedly, year after year, and all these five questions, John, if you would continue to have an open heart to your fellow faculty members, which I would say would be our N.E.D. and our executive committee, and carefully examine your conscience and your heart to say, "I know I stand where they do," and don't routinely do it, it seems to me that there ought to be room in our organizations for you if you'll tolerate the way we nitpicked you. So, John, you have been so gracious up till now, and I do know...well, I didn't mean it that way. I do know, though, that we do change from time to time.

When I'm trusting, you know, as you read the reformers, there's a danger of going to covenant theologies, there's a danger of going to limited atonement. There's a danger in moving out of our circles. We've had a faculty member who came and says, "I've moved out of that circle."

My only question to you, is, John, will you continue to very carefully keep the heartbeat of, say, the executive committee, the N.E.D., and honestly say, "Men, we really are moving apart, and, therefore, I think it's time for us to realize we're going in different directions." My question to you, John, I know you well and I know your heart, but this is my only counsel to you, and who am I to give you counsel, is, let's maintain that level we have in the past.

I do not want to any way say that any of our membership are like my students out there, but I think that the face-to-face discussions for hours we've had together has helped me have a real confidence in you and a real trust in you. And I would hope that the vast majority of the men that are here, the women, too, would look to Dr. Gregory, executive committee, and say, "Have you thoroughly discussed this with John?" as our students come to us and say, "Have you thoroughly discussed this fact?" and I said, "Yes, we have and we think they're orthodox."

Therefore, my word to you was, let's keep these lines of communication open, and I say to you folk, let's put more trust in the faculty, in those discussions in depth, and have trust for one another, and God will keep us moving forward with a group that's not out there seeking to divide and devour. We need you, John, and thank you.

Moderator: Well, we do appreciate, and on behalf of the IFCA, I do want to thank you, Dr. MacArthur, for coming and being on the hot seat here for a couple of hours.

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