

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

The Old Testament depicts the original incident of sin and the fall of man:

Genesis 3:6-10 *⁶ And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. ⁷ And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. ⁸ And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. ⁹ And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? ¹⁰ And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.*

In willfully rebelling against God, Adam lost the close communion he had with his Maker. Ever since then, mankind has been **emotionally AFRAID, emotionally NAKED** and **emotionally IN HIDING**. Our problems all stem from the fact that we are separated from the presence of God in our lives.

But when you become a Christian, this curse is reversed and many wonderful things happen:

- **All your sins are forgiven**
Colossians 2:13-14 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*
- **You become a child of God**
John 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*
- **You receive eternal life**
John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*
- **You are delivered from Satan's domain and transferred into God's kingdom**
Colossians 1:13 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*
- **Christ comes to dwell within you by His spirit**
Colossians 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*
- **You become a new creation**
2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
- **You are declared righteous by God**
2 Corinthians 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*
- **You are accepted by God**
Ephesians 1:6-7 *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

The Bible calls Satan the "father of lies" because he lies, twists and distorts the truth so that his deceptions appear to be more reasonable and attractive than the truth. That is how he snared Eve. And his tactics haven't changed one bit in the 6000 years of man's recorded history!

Since the Fall, man has often failed to turn to God for the truth about himself. Instead, he has looked to others to meet his inescapable need for self-worth. "I am what others say I am," he has reasoned. "I will find my value in their opinions of me." Isn't it amazing that we turn to others who have a perspective as limited and darkened as our own to discover our worth, instead of relying on God's Word to find out who we are!

Each of us has probably failed badly at some point in our lives. Perhaps some particular sin or weakness has caused us to feel condemned and unworthy of love. Without the hope and healing that God can provide, our evaluation of ourselves will eventually lead to despair.

In spite of Adam and Eve's sin, God's plan is to bring man back to the destiny for which he was originally created. To accomplish this, God gives us a new nature at salvation that is able to reflect His character.

Satan, however, continues to deceive people – including many Christians – into believing that the basis of their worth is their performance and their ability to please others. This is his “equation” ...

MY SELF WORTH = MY PERFORMANCE + OTHERS' OPINIONS

Some people become masters at “playing the game” to be successful and win the approval of others. Others have failed and experienced the pain of disapproval so often that they have given up and withdrawn into a shell of hurt, numbness or depression. In both cases, they are living by the deception that our worth is based on our performance and others' opinions!

In other words, we meet our God-given needs for love and acceptance by either **COMPULSIVENESS** or **WITHDRAWAL (AVOIDING RISK)**. Both are wrong!

In his landmark book, *THE SEARCH FOR SIGNIFICANCE*, Robert McGee lists the **four most common false beliefs** resulting from Satan's deceptions ...

Problem	False Belief	Consequences	God's Answer
The Performance Trap	I must “measure up” in order to feel good about myself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of failure • Perfectionism • Driven to succeed • Manipulating others to achieve success • Withdrawal from risks 	<p>JUSTIFICATION</p> <p>Romans 3:22-24 Even the righteousness of God <i>which is by faith of Jesus Christ</i> unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:</p>
The Approval Addict	I must be accepted by certain others in order to feel good about myself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of rejection • Attempting to please others at any cost • Overly sensitive to criticism • Withdrawing from others to avoid disapproval 	<p>RECONCILIATION</p> <p>Romans 14:17-18 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ <i>is</i> acceptable to God, and approved of men.</p> <p>Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.</p>
The Blame Game	Those who fail are unworthy of love and deserve to be punished.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of punishment • Punishing others • Blaming others for personal failure • Withdrawal from God and others • Driven to avoid failure 	<p>PROPITIATION</p> <p>1 John 2:1-2 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for <i>the sins of the whole world</i>.</p>
Shame	I am what I am; I cannot change; I am hopeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feelings of shame • Hopelessness • Inferiority • Passivity • Loss of creativity • Isolation • Withdrawal from others 	<p>REGENERATION</p> <p>Titus 3:5-7 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.</p>

The great religions of the world have all attempted to answer this deep need in the heart of man for love and acceptance, but sadly, they have all come up short ...

HINDUISM	Teaches that we must through our own good deeds work toward achieving oneness with the universal soul. If we fail to do this, we are punished by the law of karma, which returns us in another form of existence through reincarnation.
BUDDHISM	Teaches that we must diligently follow the Eightfold Path to rid ourselves of evil. We can never know how well we are doing, because truth cannot be objectively communicated. We must constantly strive for a state of blissful enlightenment.
ISLAM	Teaches that we must achieve salvation through a rigidly defined method of worship, enforced good deeds, and fanatical devotion. If we die while using force to bring the world under Allah's dominion, we will be welcomed to an eternal state of sensuality.
DENOMINAL CHRISTIANITY	Teaches that we achieve salvation through mere belief in Jesus Christ, in contradiction to the clear teaching of God's Word. It often results in no lasting life change, as converts are left to live Christ's teachings through their own power.
APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY	Teaches that we achieve salvation through explicitly obeying God's Word, resulting in a real death to the "old man" and a real "new birth," accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit to live a Christian life.

THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE FREE!

John 15:1, 4-5 *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. ... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

John 3:3, 6-8 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ... That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*