

Your Life and God

*Considering the purpose and character of your life,
and your relationship to the One who gave you life.*

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Services

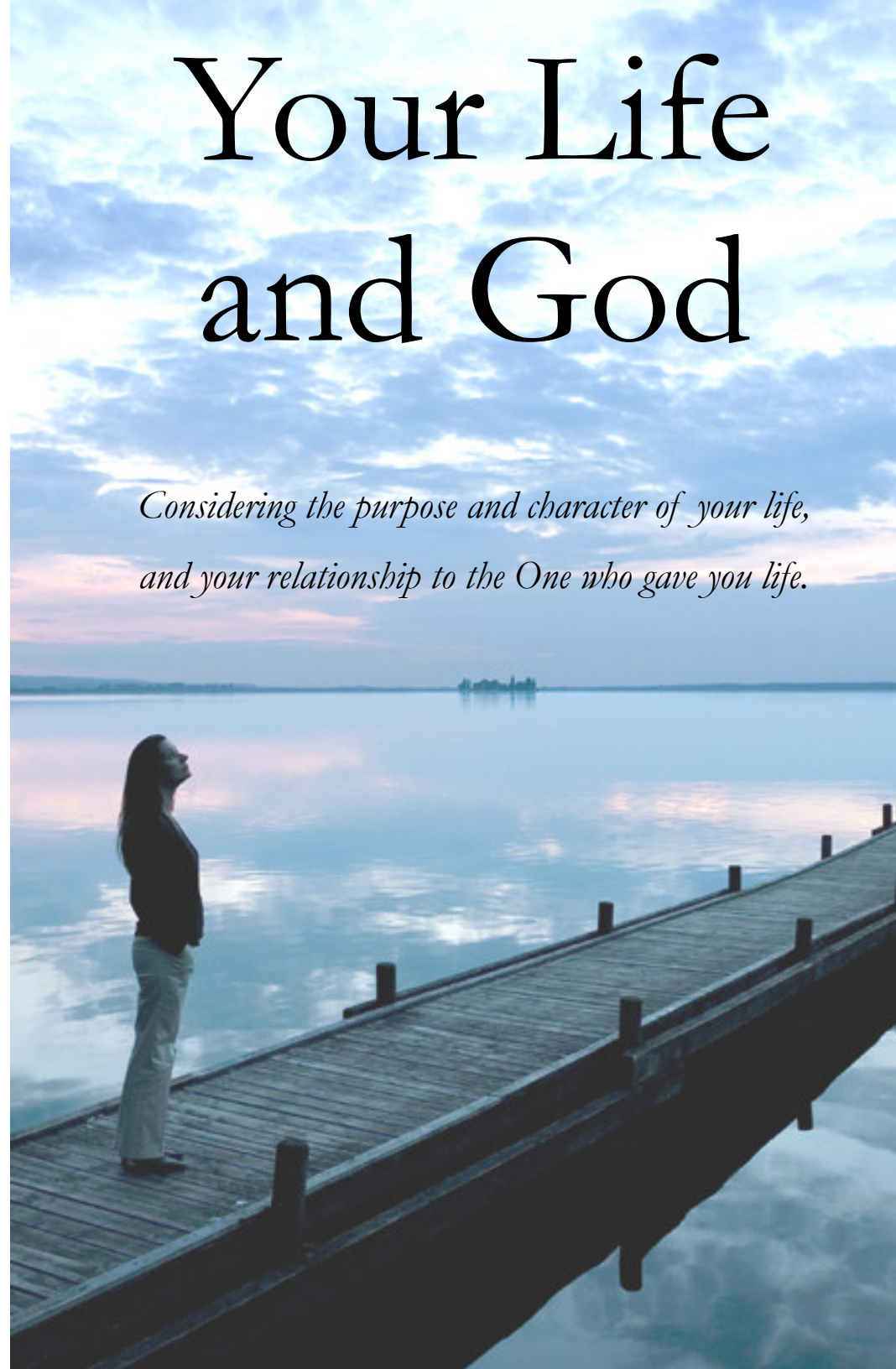
Meeting at the Windsor Community Center

Sunday Morning, 10:30

Sunday Fellowship Meal, 12:00

Sunday Afternoon, 1:00

Wednesday Prayer and Bible Study, 7:00 p.m.



Life—it can be exhilarating one moment and then so frustrating the next. It can seem as if life is just one meaningless struggle for existence. But is that true? Are we just part of the evolutionary chain of life, no more important than some single-celled life form? Why *are* you here?

For thousands of years many have tried to answer this extremely important question, with just as many different answers. Who's right, and how can you know if they're right? Is there *one* right answer? *Where* can the answer to "why am I here" be found?

Only God can tell us *what* we should live for and *how* we must live, for He created everything for a specific purpose and reason. But who is this God that tells us why we're here? He has told us about Himself and the answer to the question "Why am I here?" in the Bible.

Who is God?

Who is God and what is He like? While we can't know everything about God, we *can* know Him as He has told us about Himself. He is the *eternal* God, the God the Bible tells us about, the one true and living God: "I am the Lord, and there is no savior besides Me" (Isaiah 43:11). God is *holy*—He is pure and without sin: "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor" (Habakkuk 1:13). He is also *righteous*—everything He does is right and good.

The Bible also tells us "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Before there was anything, God existed. He has no beginning and no end. Everything in this world is "from Him and through Him and to Him" (Romans 11:36). All that you are and have is from His loving hand: "he himself gives to all people life and breath and all things" (Acts 17:25). Because He created everything He is "worthy to receive glory and honor and power" (Revelation 4:11).



When you truly turn away (repent) from your sin, you have a changed attitude and a changed life. You are heading in a different direction, away from sin and death toward holiness and life. If you are now in Christ, you are "a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). You have a desire and willingness to *stop* sinful habits and activities and *start* living for God. You have made Christ the Lord and Master of your life. "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" (1 John 2:29). If you have truly trusted Christ for salvation, the evidence will be clearly seen in how you live your life.

You might wonder, "How do I learn how God wants me to live? How can I know what changes I need to start making in my life?" The Bible says that if you are a Christian, you are like a newborn baby, and just like babies want milk, you must "long for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2). The "pure milk of the Word" is the Bible. When you have been saved from sin you will have a longing, a craving to learn more about the God who saved you. In order to learn how to live for God you must read and be taught what the Bible says and depend on His strength to obey it.

After you trust Christ, one of the first things you should do is start going to a church that believes, teaches, and does what the Bible says. A church is a group of believers who gather together to worship God, learn God's Word, encourage each other to live right, and do all that the Bible tells them to do. The Bible calls them "the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). By joining with other believers, they will help you learn from the Bible how to live right. Their encouragement and Christ-like example will provide the support and accountability you need to *live your life* so it glorifies and pleases the *Lord*.



If you have trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, are still unsure about your need of salvation from sin, or you're unclear about how God wants you to live, please contact Orwell Bible Church as soon as possible, and someone will be able to help you with your concerns or questions.

How can you be saved from the terrible power and penalty of sin? You must *repent* of your sin and *trust* Jesus Christ. You must admit to God that you have sinned against Him, that you deserve to be eternally judged, and that you have absolutely no goodness to save yourself. You must put your *full* trust, confidence, and faith in Jesus Christ alone, you must humble yourself *before* Him to be saved *through* Him.

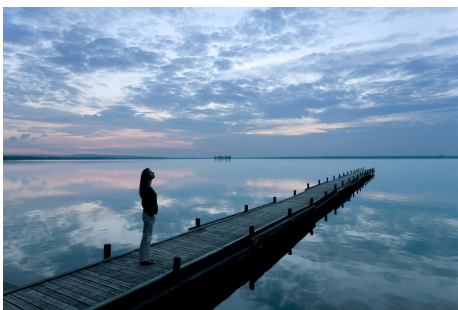
To reject Christ is to reject life and continue in sin, and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23a). To trust Christ is to receive life, and “the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23b).

You must turn from your sin and trust Christ! “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). Friend, this is not something to put off for another time—“*now* is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). You cannot continue living as you are thinking life will just keep going—don’t think to yourself “I have many years to come” (Luke 16:19) as God may say “You fool! This night your soul is required of you” (16:20).

How do Christians Live?

What happens when you turn from your sin and trust Christ? You are declared righteous in God’s sight because you have trusted Christ alone to save you (Romans 4:5). You are no longer God’s enemy—“therefore having been justified (declared righteous) by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). You will not face God’s wrath: “having now been justified by His blood, we shall be *saved from the wrath* of God through Him” (Romans 5:9).

Salvation not only delivers you from sin’s power and penalty, it gives you new life which enables you to start living as God intended you to live. Jesus Christ died for our sins so “that we might die to sin and live to righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24). If you repent of your sin and trust Christ for salvation, you are no longer under sin’s power. God has given you new life,



and as live out this new life you will begin to live more and more like God wants you to live. “As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived [before you knew Christ]. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:14-16).

Why Am I Here?

God made the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, and from them He made “every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26). But *why* are we here? Why did God create us? Why has He given us “life and breath and all things” (Acts 17:25)? **So that we “would seek God”** (Acts 17:27). To seek God means to live for God, enjoy a relationship with Him, serve Him, and honor Him. It doesn’t matter what you do, from the simplest task to major life-changing decisions, God declares “whether then you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

You exist to glorify God and that means you must have *godly* thoughts, desires, and actions. Your entire life—all your thoughts, desires, and actions—is to be in line with *God’s* will and reflect *God’s* character. God made you so that as you live a holy and righteous life you would enjoy barrier-free fellowship with Him.

What Went Wrong?

But is this how people live? Do we have this kind of fellowship with God? Today people say “go for the gusto” because “you only go around once.” However, living for “now” is *not* the reason God made us—He made us to *live for Him* and to *live forever*. How did it happen that people would live for themselves and die, if God’s creation was perfect? Again, the Bible gives the answer: “through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners” (Romans 5:12, 19). The “go for the gusto” philosophy of life came into existence way back when Adam and Eve disobeyed God—He told them how to live, but instead they disobeyed God’s command and did what they wanted to do.



What was the result of Adam's sin? All who enter this world are born sinful: everyone must confess, "I was brought forth in *iniquity*, and in *sin* my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5). *Iniquity* and *sin* mean that we have rebelled against God's expectations and missed the mark He has set for us. Everyone who has been born of a man and woman is a sinner before God. Sin is the failure to conform to God's holy character and the transgression of His holy will (Romans 3:23; 1 John 3:4).



Maybe you don't consider yourself a "sinner." The problem is that being a sinner isn't a matter of your opinion. *God* is the standard you are measured by. So far you have learned something of what God's character is like; but what has He *commanded*? Consider some of the Ten Commandments—

- Don't use God's name in vain (a careless way)
- Honor your parents
- Don't murder—and anger in your heart is the same thing (Matthew 5:22)
- Don't commit adultery—and lust in your heart is the same thing (Matthew 5:28)
- Don't lie

Breaking just *one* commandment makes you a law-breaker, a rebel against God, a *sinner*! Because we are sinners from day one, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Our sinful state before God results in "a depraved mind" (Romans 1:28), so that our desires and decisions are so corrupted by sin (missing the mark God has set for us) that we live only for ourselves instead of God—we rebel against Him and choose to *leave* Him rather than *seek* Him.

What are the consequences of sinning against God?

First, the relationship God intended us to enjoy with Him is lost. We are spiritually blind and "dead in transgressions" (Ephesians 2:5). This means that instead of seeking God as He intended, "there is none who seeks for God" (Romans 3:11). Instead of gladly obeying and pleasing God we cannot and do not want to: "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7-8).

rebellion against God, trying to be Lord of your own life. If you have been living your life without God, do you recognize how wrong that is? What is your attitude about that? Do you see the need to turn from your sin *now*?

Repentance also means you no longer want anything to do with sin. If you truly have a change of mind and attitude about your sin, you will have **a *desire and willingness to stop sinning***. Repentance involves a change of attitude about sin which results in **a *complete change of life*** so that people will see that change and say that "you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Why must you repent of your sin? Jesus Christ gives the answer: "no one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24). God made you to live *for Him*—but you left God to live for yourself. In order to be right with God you must repent of your sin and turn back to God; you can't have it both ways.

But repentance from sin is not the only thing necessary to receive salvation through Christ—you must also "confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead" (Romans 10:9). Most people feel that they can be right with God by doing good things, but you have already seen from the Bible how impossible that is. God says that He saves "not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness" (Titus 3:5) but only "through faith in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 2:16).

What does it mean to have *faith in Christ Jesus*? It means that you must **trust** Jesus Christ to save you from sin's power and penalty and to provide you with the righteousness you need to be right with God. You must rely entirely and exclusively on Him—you can't trust *any* of your good works to make you right with God.



In order to trust Christ so you can be right with God you must **understand who God is, what your sin means, who Jesus Christ is and what He did for you**. As the God-man He lived a perfect life, paid sin's price by dying on the cross, and defeated death by rising from the dead. To *have faith in Christ Jesus* means that you not only **know** these things, but you are absolutely **convinced** that they are true and **rely** only on Jesus Christ for salvation. You must "confess with your mouth Jesus *as Lord*" (Romans 10:9).

Why did He do this? Because only Jesus the God-man could make the full payment that our sin required. “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21). “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (Ephesians 1:7).

Sin shows its iron grip in death, as no one has been able to escape its grasp. What about someone like Jesus, who never sinned but yet voluntarily died for the sins of mankind? “God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power” (Acts 2:24). Christ not only paid the full price of sin, but He broke its power when He rose from the dead.

Because Jesus sacrificed His life for ours, He turned God’s wrath away from us and toward Himself. The result is that we can only “be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Romans 5:9). Through Christ’s sinless life, His sacrifice for us on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead He broke the power of sin, removed the guilt of sin, paid the price of sin, and brings God and the sinner back together. “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the **death** of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His **life**” (Romans 5:10).

What Must I Do?

God made you so that you would live for Him, but you have turned away from this loving and holy God to live for yourself. Your rejection of an infinitely good God is also a rejection of an eternal life with infinite blessings, so that you deserve an eternal death of infinite punishment. The only way you can be saved from all the terrible consequences of sin is by having your sin forgiven—wiped out—and replaced with the righteousness of God. This is called *salvation*, and you can only be saved through Jesus Christ. How can you receive this salvation through Jesus Christ?



You must “repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away” (Acts 3:19). What does it mean to *repent*? It means you must turn “from vain things to a living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them” (Acts 14:15). Remember, sin is a total rejection of God, and in order to be right with Him you must totally reject sin. You must have **a complete change of mind and attitude about your sin**—you see it as God sees it, for what it really is—



The *second* effect of sin is physical death. We would all like to think that we’ll live forever, but this is one appointment that cannot be avoided: “it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27) and “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

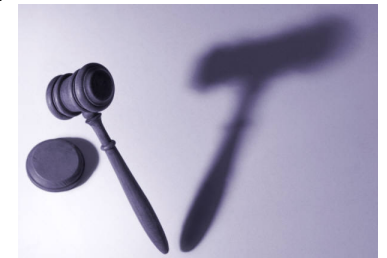
The *last* result of sin is loss of eternal life—the Bible says that sinners “will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25:46). We often think that only really bad people end up in Hell, but God says that even for “liars their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). The “second death” is eternal separation from God—unimaginable, never ending punishment that God must inflict upon sinners because He is infinitely holy. “For those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger” (Romans 2:8). Hell is not a place of fun and games; the Bible says that it is a place of “eternal punishment” (Matthew 25:46) and “darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 22:13). There “the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night” (Revelation 14:11).

What Can I Do?

By now you may wonder, “Is there anything I can do to escape these consequences of sin?” There are four things that must be taken care of:

FIRST, the guilt of sin must be removed.

Sin creates a permanent stain called *guilt*. Being guilty means that you *are* held responsible for rebelling against God and for missing the mark He has established (Leviticus 4:27; Numbers 5:6; 15:31; Psalm 32:5; Ezra 9:15). Why must guilt be removed? Because God will not “leave the guilty unpunished” (Exodus 34:7).



SECOND, the power of sin must be broken. The Bible says that if you sin you are a “slave to sin” (Romans 6:6), sin is “master over you” (Romans 6:14), and that sin reigns in you so that you “obey its lusts” (Romans 6:12). If sin’s power is not broken, you will continue to be its slave and do its bidding.

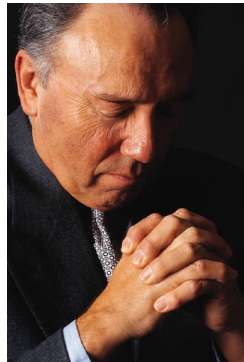
THIRD, the penalty of sin must be fully paid. Because God is holy (without sin) He must respond to those who sin against Him by punishing them. This punishment is the penalty of sin—“the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). The full force of God’s wrath is aimed at the sinner who has rebelled against Him. When we do not seek God but instead “gratify the cravings of our sinful nature and follow its desires and thoughts” this just confirms that we are “by nature objects of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). We must be “saved from the wrath of God,” His intense displeasure (Romans 5:9).

FOURTH, you must be reconciled to his God. Sin destroyed your relationship with God and made you His enemy: “your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear” (Isaiah 59:2). As sinners by birth and by choice we now rebel and fight against God instead of seek Him. We must “be reconciled to God” (2 Corinthians 5:20) by having the sin removed which has cut off from Him.

How can you rid yourself of guilt, gain freedom from sin’s bondage, pay the full price sin requires, and repair the breach between you and God? The solution isn’t hard to see: if you are sinful in God’s eyes, your sin must be *forgiven*—wiped away—and you must have *God’s kind of righteousness* and nothing less in order to be acceptable to Him. How can your sins be forgiven, how can you as a sinner be righteous?

Most people feel that by living a good life, being kind to others, going to church, or being baptized God will “grade on the curve” and say they’re good enough and then give them eternal life. They think that only those who do “really bad” things like killing someone or robbing a bank deserve hell. The truth is far from this, though.

You *can* be saved from the guilt, power, and penalty of sin, but “not as a result of works” (Ephesians 2:9). Your good works cannot *make* you righteous and *save* you from sin’s power and penalty. Because you are *already* a sinner, sin pollutes everything you do, so that “all your righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). No matter how many good things you do, they will never be enough (Romans 4:4); it will always be that “in God’s sight no man living is righteous” (Psalm 143:2). “There is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good



and who never sins” (Ecclesiastes 7:20). “Who can say, ‘I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?’” (Proverbs 20:9). There is absolutely *nothing* that *you* can do to save yourself, but in the Bible God has said in the Bible that you *can* be saved from sin’s power and penalty.

What Has God Done?

By now you should realize that you have sinned against God and that sin produces a guilt you cannot remove, a bondage you cannot break free from, a penalty that will take you an eternity to pay, and a separation between you and God that you cannot repair. If there is nothing *you* can do to save *yourself* from the consequences and penalty of sin, and the Bible says you *can* be saved, who *can* save you?

Amazingly, the same holy God who must judge you for your rebellion against Him has also shown His love for you providing the righteousness you need to be free of all sin’s consequences. Only God could provide a way for you to be right with Him. How has He done this?

The Bible tells us that “God sent forth His Son, born of a woman” (Galatians 4:4), “a virgin” (Matthew 1:23). This one who was born of a woman was named “Jesus” meaning “Savior,” for “He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). Jesus was *like* us in that He was a real, genuine human being, but He was *not* like us as He was also God. Why did God become a man? “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (Hebrews 2:14-15).

As a man Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life: He “committed no sin” (1 Peter 2:22; cf. also Hebrews 4:15) “and in Him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5). Unlike you and me, Jesus obeyed God *completely*, He was totally righteous, He never missed the mark (Romans 8:3-4). As fully God and fully man He had *God’s* kind of righteousness.

But Jesus did more than just live a perfect life. He took the guilt and penalty of *your* sin upon Himself and paid the full price that it required: “He Himself bore our sins in His body *on the cross*, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24).

