

**Glossary**  
of  
**Words Used by Christians**  
in  
**Conversation and Church Services**

Simple, clear, non-technical definitions  
especially designed for new Christians.



●*Steppingstone Discipleship Series*●

**Church of the Nazarene**

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

1. While you are a new Christian and you hear a word used, or see it in print, that you do not understand, you may look it up in this glossary to see what it means.
2. If you still don't understand, you may ask your pastor or a Christian friend to explain more about the word.
3. Later on, in the course of the discipleship lessons there will be a time for a more specific focus on the systematic study of Christian vocabulary. You will gain insight into many Christian doctrines (beliefs) as you study the meaning of words.
4. Whenever you look up a word we suggest that you write a sentence using it on the line below it in the glossary.
5. Some Bible references are given for verses where each word is found. It will help you better understand the word if you look up at least one of them to see how it is used in the Bible. All Bible references refer to the NIV (*New International Version*).

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**Carnal Mind (Sinful Mind):** Describes the way a person thinks before his/her nature is cleansed from sin.

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Bible References: Rom. 8:6-8

**Charismatic:** A branch of the evangelical church that practices speaking in “tongues” (unintelligible sounds), and emphasizes physical healing.

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Bible References: This word is not in the Bible.

**Christian Perfection:** The state of a person who has reached the stage of loving God with his/her “whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.”

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Bible References: Mt. 5:48; 2 Cor. 13:9,11; Col. 1:28

**Christlikeness:** The state of being like Christ.

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Bible References: Eph. 4:13

**Clergy:** Persons who are professional ministers.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Comforter (Counselor), The:** This is one of the names applied to the Holy Spirit.

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Bible References: Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7

**Communion (also called the Lord’s Supper):** A ceremony (sacrament) in which a small amount of bread and grape juice is consumed by believers in memory of what Jesus did for them on the cross. The bread represents His broken body and the juice His shed blood. Jesus commanded that this be observed until He comes again.

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Bible References: 1 Cor. 11:23-26

**Condemnation:** The state of a person who has violated the laws of God.

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Bible References: Rom. 5:16, 18; 8:1

## GLOSSARY OF CHRISTIAN VOCABULARY

**Accept or Receive Christ:** The act of a person to put his/her faith and trust in Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

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Bible References: Jn. 1:12; Col. 2:6

**Adoption:** At the same time we accept the gift of salvation we become sons of God. He makes us members of his family by adopting us as his children.

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Bible References: Jn. 1:12-13; Gal. 3:26

**Adultery:** Unfaithfulness of a husband or wife to his/her marriage partner.

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Bible References: Mt. 5:27-28, 32; 15:19; Mk. 7:21; 10:19

**Amen:** A word sometimes spoken in a worship service to express agreement with what is being said or sung or felt. It literally means “so be it.” Prayers are usually concluded with this word.

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Bible References: 1 Chr. 16:36; Neh. 8:6; Psa. 41:13; Eph. 3:21.

**Angel:** A messenger sent from God.

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Bible References: Mt. 24:31; 28:2, 5; Lk. 1:11, 13, 18-19, 26, 28, 30

**Anoint or anointing:** This word is used in two senses: (1) A drop of oil symbolizing the Holy Spirit is placed on a person’s head when special prayer for healing is done. (2) When a preacher senses that God is helping him/her in a special way while preaching, it is said that he/she is preaching under the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

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Bible References: Jas. 5:14

**Apostle:** The word generally refers to the 12 men chosen by Christ (sometimes called disciples) to carry on His work. Saint Paul also considered himself an apostle.

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Bible References: 2 Pet. 1:1; Rom. 1:1

**Apostles Creed, The:** A concise summary of the most important Christian beliefs developed by the early church, and still used in Christian services today.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Arminiansim:** A system of theology developed by James Arminius, which emphasizes that salvation comes through the exercise of the freedom of choice, in reaction to the concept of predestination.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Ascension:** Upon completing His ministry on earth, Christ returned to heaven, taken up through the clouds.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible. ( See Acts 1:9-11.)

**Atonement (Reconciliation):** The atonement refers to the work of Christ on the cross in our behalf. It is what He did to make it possible for our sins to be forgiven.

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Bible References: Heb. 2:17

**Backsliding:** The act of going back into sin after conversion.

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Bible References: Jer.2:19; 14:7; 15:6

**Baptism:** A symbolic ceremony in which a new Christian is briefly submerged in water (or sometimes sprinkled) giving a public testimony of his/her new life in Christ.

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Bible References: Mk. 16:16; Jn. 3:22-23; Ac. 2:38-41

**Baptism with the Holy Spirit:** A work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart sometime after conversion, which results in purity of heart and power for service. It happens when a person reaches a point of total consecration to God. This is what happened to the disciples of Christ on the Day of Pentecost. It is sometimes referred to as being "filled with the Holy Spirit."

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Bible References: Mt. 3:11; Mk. 1:8; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:33

**Blood, The:** The blood that Christ shed on the cross. It symbolizes the price of our redemption.

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Bible References: Mt. 26:28; Lk. 22:20; Ac. 20:28; Rom. 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19

**Body of Christ:** All true Christians compose the body of Christ, sometimes called the "invisible" church.

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Bible References: 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 4:12

**Born Again:** A person is said to be born again when he/she experiences the forgiveness of sins and receives the new spiritual life imparted by God.

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Bible References: Jn. 3:5-7; 1 Pet. 1:23

**Call, A:** The personal communication of God to a person of His selection of him/her for a special ministry.

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Bible References: Rom.1:1; 1 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1

**Calvary:** The name of the place where Christ was crucified (literally, the place of a skull).

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Bible References: Lk. 23:33

**Calvinism:** A system of theology first developed by John Calvin that teaches that only a select group of people are predestined to salvation.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Hades:** The place of the dead before the final judgment.

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Bible References: Mt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18

**Hallelujah:** This is a universal word, pronounced similarly in all languages, which expresses praise to God.

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Bible References: Rev. 19:1-6

**Holy Week:** The week preceding Easter during which special services are often held in memory of the death of Christ.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Incarnation (The):** The act in which Christ, being God, became united with human nature, spirit, and body, and came to earth to live among the human race.

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Bible References: See Phil. 2:5-8

**Inspiration:** The method by which God communicated the truth to the writers of the Bible. He put the truth into their minds and allowed them to write through their own personalities and styles.

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Bible References: 2 Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:1

**Intercession:** The kind of prayer prayed in behalf of other persons.

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Bible References: 1 Tim. 2:1; Rom. 8:26-27; Heb. 7:25

**Jehovah:** The word used as a proper name for God.

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Bible References: Translated "LORD" in modern versions. (Note all capital letters.)

**Justification:** In our sinful state we are condemned by God's law. After being forgiven we are no longer condemned, but *justified*. We are no longer guilty! We stand before God's law just as if we had never sinned.

---

Bible References: Rom. 3:24, 4:25, 5:1; 8:1-2

**Confession:** The act of a sinner admitting that he/she has sinned against God. It may also be used to refer to what a person says he/she believes about Christ.

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Bible References: Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Jn. 1:9; Heb. 3:1

**Consecration:** The act of offering (giving) something to God. It may be time, money, or a person's own life and being.

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Bible References: Rom. 6:13-19; 12:1; Heb. 13:15

**Conversion:** The change that takes place when Christ comes into a person's heart to forgive sins and impart spiritual life. When this happens a person is said to be "converted" (transformed).

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Bible References: Rom. 6:4, 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:22-24

**Conviction:** The result of the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of persons which makes them aware that they are sinners.

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Bible References: 1 Thes. 1:5

**Crucifixion:** The method used to put Christ to death (nailing Him to a cross).

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Bible References: Mt. 27:22-23; Mk. 15:24; Lk. 23:33; Jn. 19:6, 15, 16, 18

**Death to Self:** The act of doing away with selfishness and becoming completely devoted to Christ.

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Bible References: Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5

**Deity:** This term refers to God. When applied to Christ, it simply means that He is divine (God).

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Bible References: Col. 2:9

**Depravity:** The descriptive characteristic of a sinful nature.

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Bible References: Rom. 1:29; 2 Pet. 2:19

**Divinity of Christ, The:** The assertion that Christ was truly God.

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Bible References: Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3; Mt. 16:16

**Evangelical:** The branch of the Protestant church which focuses especially on salvation through Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone, to the glory of God alone.

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Bible References: This word is not in the Bible.

**Evangelism:** The activity of the church to bring about the conversion of sinners.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Faith:** This word is used in three ways: (1) To simply believe something you can't prove. (2) To put your trust and confidence in Christ for your salvation (saving faith). (3) The fundamental beliefs and doctrines of Christianity (the Christian faith).

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Bible References: Heb. 11:1, 6; Mt. 17:20; Rom. 1:17, 5:1; Col. 2:6-7; Jude 1:3

**Fasting:** The practice of going without food for a period of time in order to devote oneself to prayer.

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Bible References: Ac. 13:2;14:23; Lk. 2:37

**Fornication (Sexual Immorality):** Immoral conduct, especially as it refers to illicit sexual relationships.

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Bible References: Ac. 15:20, 29; 1 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 5:19; Col. 3:5; 1Thes. 4:3

**Fruit of the Spirit:** The characteristics of the life of a person filled with the Holy Spirit.

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Bible References: Gal. 5:22-23

**Full Salvation:** The experience of a person who has realized the full potential of solving the sin problem. A person whose sinful acts have been forgiven, and subsequently, whose sinful nature has been cleansed.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Gifts (Spiritual):** Abilities given by the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the church.

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Bible References: Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Cor. 12:28-31; Heb. 2:4

**Glorification:** The *change* that takes place in the human body between death and entering heaven.

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Bible References: See 1 Cor. 15:52

**Gospel:** The "Good News" of God's plan of salvation for mankind.

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Bible References: Mt. 24:14; Mk. 1:1; 13:10; Rom. 1:15-16

**Grace:** The good things God does for us that we do not deserve. For example, we are saved by grace alone, not because of good works (actions) that we have done. Salvation is a free gift of God's grace.

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Bible References: 2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 1:7, 2:7-8

**Great Commission, The:** The command of Christ to his disciples to take the Gospel message to the entire world.

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Bible References: Mt. 28:19-20

**Growth (spiritual):** After conversion, a process of spiritual growth begins that lasts throughout the lifetime. It is both possible and necessary for us to constantly progress in our knowledge of God towards the goal of becoming like Christ.

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Bible References: 2 Cor. 10:15; Eph. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18

**Revival:** A periodic emphasis (or series of special services) for the purpose of bringing renewal into the church.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible. The formula for revival is found in 2 Chr. 7:14.

**Sabbath Day:** A day of rest once a week. Most Christians celebrate the Sabbath on Sunday in commemoration of the resurrection of Christ on that day.

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Bible References: Ex. 20:8-10; Mk. 2:27-28

**Sacrament:** A sacrament is a ceremony which symbolizes something that God has done in the heart of the believer. Most evangelical churches recognize baptism and communion (the Lord's supper) as sacraments.

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Bible References: The word is not in the Bible.

**Salvation:** The plan offered by God by which persons can escape the penalty of their sins and receive the gift of eternal life.

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Bible References: Acts 4:12; 1 Thes. 5:9; 2 Tim. 2:10; Heb. 2:3

**Sanctification, Entire:** The act of God purifying the heart from inbred sin (the sin with which we were born).

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Bible References: 1 Thes. 4:3-4; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2

**Sanctify:** To purify or make a person holy. (In the O.T. it meant to separate something for a holy purpose.)

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Bible References: Jn. 17:17; 1 Thes. 4:3

**Saved:** The term applied to persons who have received salvation. It applies to those who have been rescued from the guilt and penalty of their sins.

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Bible References: Mk. 16:16; Ac. 2:21, 4:12, 16:30-31; Rom. 10:13

**Kingdom of God (The):** The kingdom of God exists wherever His will is being done. It is not a political kingdom. It exists primarily in the hearts of men and women.

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Bible References: Mk. 1:15; 10:14; 12:34; Lk. 4:43; 8:1; 9:2, 11; 17:21; Ac. 19:8; 2 Thes. 1:5

**Laity:** All people in the church who are not professional ministers.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Lamb of God, The:** In the Old Testament, lambs were sacrificed to atone for sin. Then, Jesus came to be the Lamb of God sacrificed for our sins,

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Bible References: Jn. 1:29, 36

**Lent:** A period of 40 days immediately prior to Easter during which Christians prepare their hearts for the celebration of their redemption.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Means of Grace:** The resources God has provided to help us live a victorious Christian life. It includes such things as the sacraments, worship services, Bible study, prayer, etc.

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Bible References: The phrase "means of grace" is not in the Bible, but there are many references to the benefits of grace. See: Ac. 20:32; 2 Cor. 9:8; Heb. 4:16; 13:25; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:2; 3:18.

**Modernism (Liberalism):** A theological perspective that denies many of the traditional Christian beliefs such as the virgin birth of Christ, the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, etc.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Morality:** The application of the principles of right and wrong as revealed by God (in the Bible).

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Nazarene, The:** Jesus grew up in the town of Nazareth and later became known as “the Nazarene”. The name Church of the Nazarene is simply another way of saying the Church of Christ.

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Bible References: Mt. 2:23; Mk. 14:67; 16:6

**New Birth:** As physical birth marks the entrance into life in this world, so the new birth marks the beginning of spiritual life. Before the new birth we are dead (spiritually) in our sins. After Christ forgives us and gives us new spiritual life we are said to be “born again.”

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Bible References: Jn. 3:3,7; 1 Pet. 1:3,23

**Old Man, The (or Old Self):** The sinful nature before its transformation into a “new” man.

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Bible References: Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9; Gal. 5:16, 17, 19, 24

**Original Sin:** The “sinful nature” of mankind. Sometimes called “inbred sin” because we are all born with it.

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Bible References: Rom. 7:25; 8:4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13; Gal. 5:16, 17, 19

**Orthodoxy:** The traditional fundamentals of the Christian faith.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Paraclete:** A name given to the Holy Spirit that emphasizes His ministry as our helper. It is based on the Greek word that is translated “Counselor” or “Comforter.”

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Pentecost:** Originally this was a Jewish festival. However, on this day, fifty days following the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples of Christ were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

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Bible References: Ac. 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8

**Protestant:** A movement in the church that resulted from the reformation started by Martin Luther when he protested some of the abuses he observed in the Roman Catholic church.

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Bible References: This word is not in the Bible since the Protestant Reformation took place many centuries after the Bible was written.

**Purity:** The state of a person’s heart that has been cleansed by the Holy Spirit.

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Bible References: Mt. 5:8; 2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 2:15; 1 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:14; Ac. 15:9

**Rapture:** The act of a believer being caught-up into the air to meet Christ when He returns to earth.

---

Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible. (See 1 Thes. 4:16-17)

**Reconciliation:** The process of being brought back to a proper relation to God.

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Bible References: Rom. 5:11; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:19-20

**Regeneration:** The act of God that imparts spiritual life.

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Bible References: Rom. 6:11; 1 Cor. 15:22; Eph. 2:4-5; Col. 2:13

**Repentance:** A change of attitude concerning sin. It means being sorry for sins committed against God and a strong resolve to quit sinning.

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Bible References: Mt. 4:17; Lk. 5:32, 13:3; 2 Cor. 7:10; 2 Pet. 3:9

**Restitution:** What a person does to make amends for wrongs committed against God or other persons.

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Bible References: The word is not in the Bible. See Lk. 19:8.

**Second Coming:** The first coming of Christ was when He was born in Bethlehem. He promised that He would come back to earth a second time in glory to seek His church.

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Bible References: Mk. 14:62; Ac. 1:11; Heb. 9:28; Mt. 16:27

**Sin (principle):** The sinful nature with which we are all born as a part of a sinful race. It is sometimes called "original sin" or "inbred sin." It results in a tendency or inclination of human nature towards sinful acts

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Bible References: Rom. 7:17, 20

**Sins (committed):** Willful violations of the law of God. It can be thought of as disobedience, or rebellion against God.

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Bible Reference: Heb. 10:17,26; Jas. 4:17; 1 Jn 3:4

**Spirit, The:** The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity.

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Bible References: Mt. 3:16; 4:1; 10:20; Jn. 3:5; 7:39

**Stewardship:** Our responsibility to care for the things God gives us and use them for His purposes and glory.

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Bible References: See "Manager," in Lk. 12:42; 16:1-3.

**Temptation:** The experience of being confronted with the possibility of doing something wrong or evil. Temptation itself is not sin, but when given the assent of the will it becomes sin.

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Bible References: Mt. 26:41; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Tim. 6:9

**Testimony:** A Christian testimony is given when a person speaks of what God has done in his/her personal experience. It may include blessings received, answered prayers, or the experience of salvation (forgiveness of sins, etc.). Sometimes in public services people are invited to give their testimony.

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Bible References: Jn. 3:11; 15:27; 19:35; 21:24

**Trinity:** The Bible clearly teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. But, while they are distinct "persons," they are

united and inseparable in such a way as to be only one God: the three in one.

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Bible References: Not in the Bible. See Mt. 28:19.

**Virgin Birth:** Jesus was not conceived in the way of other human beings. His conception in Mary took place by action of the Holy Spirit. This was necessary in order for Him to be sinless since all human beings are born with a sinful nature. He was truly human (except without sin), and truly God, the God-man.

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Bible References: Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23; Lk. 1:26-35

**Walk in the light:** As we walk down the pathway of God, He will sometimes shed new light before us to illuminate the way we should go. To "walk in the light" simply means to be obedient as God leads us.

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Bible References: 1 Jn. 1:7

**Wesleyanism:** The teaching of John Wesley, especially as it relates to Christian Perfection and Entire Sanctification.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible.

**Witness:** The act of a Christian sharing his/her experience of God with another person.

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Bible References: Acts 1:8

**Word (The):** A word is a medium of communication. Jesus was the medium through which God revealed Himself to the world. Even before Jesus came to earth he was known as the Word. While on earth He was the living Word. The story of His life and teaching (the Bible) is the written Word. Therefore the Bible is commonly referred to as the Word of God.

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Bible References: Jn. 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13

**World Mission:** The mission of the church to take the Gospel to all persons everywhere.

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Bible References: This expression is not used in the Bible. (See Mt. 28:19-20)