



The Believer's Standing And State



by
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Introduction

One of the most misunderstood doctrines in the Bible concerns the believer's "Standing" and "State." It is important to know what we believe and why. (*Luke 1:1-4*) Believers become confused when they do not understand the doctrines of our standing and state.

If we are to rightly divide the Word of Truth, (*II Timothy 2:15*) we need to grasp who we are in Christ as related to our standing, and then to our state. We need to be diligent workmen, pleasing to the Lord as we search out the scriptures. May we be approved in our efforts and studies. May the eyes of our understanding be enlightened. (*Ephesians 1:18*)

Standing

*"Through Whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we **stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* (*Romans 5:2*)

Our position in the family of God has to do with our standing. This is an essential of the faith! Just as a baby is born into a family naturally-speaking, a

child of God has to be born into God's family spiritually. This occurs when an individual accepts Christ as his Savior. Through Him we now have entrance into the family of God. We have access and introduction.

In *John 3:1-12*, we read the story of Nicodemus' coming to Jesus. This teacher of Israel needed to be born into the family of God spiritually. (We all need to be born again.) Jesus came to the point quickly by stating to this religious teacher that he had to be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed a spiritual birth. This has to do with our standing.

Jesus answered and said unto him, "*Most assuredly, I say unto you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God..... Do not marvel that I said unto you, 'You must be born again.'*" (*John 3:3, 7*)

This Pharisee had no position or standing with Jesus. Nicodemus had been born into the world by flesh and blood parents, but had not been born spiritually, or from above. His first birth was natural. Now, he needed a second birth, a spiritual birth.

Nicodemus was like every person born into the world. He was a sinner. He was not in a relationship with the Lord. This individual was a sinner, separated from Christ. Sinners are born to sin, and Nicodemus was separated from God. He had no access before his conversion.

“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,” (Romans 3:24)

The apostle Paul spoke to this issue regarding sinners needing to be saved by accepting Christ. *(Acts 16:30-31, John 5:36; Titus 3:5)*

Through acceptance of Christ, one’s sins would be blotted out. An individual’s sins would be forgiven; he/she would have a standing or position in God’s family, and would see the Kingdom of God.

*“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we **stand**, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Romans 5:1-2)*

Notice, “...in which we **STAND**.” We have a **standing** after we accept Christ. We have gone from a sinner separated from God to a saint who is now separated unto God. This new birth is seen in the following passages of the Bible:

- *Ephesians 1:6* says we are accepted in the Beloved. Now we have a “standing.” This is a past provision. This is our standing forever.

- *Ephesians 1:13* states that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit. Now we have a “position.” Just as Abraham was justified by faith, we can be justified by faith.

Furthermore, justification is a judicial act of God whereby He declares a sinner who comes to Christ as righteous. Now, we are completed in terms of position or standing. This standing or position means we are “born again” believers and

we have been translated from death to life. Access by faith is complete.

“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,” (Romans 4:5)

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14)

Notice, this is all past tense. This is a once-for-all relationship that cannot be reversed. This new birth is permanent. Legally and positionally, we are saved and equal with all other believers in terms of our standing. This standing or position means we have eternal life through Jesus Christ, and this place we have is firm. We are safe.

“And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” (I John 5:11)

Think about a child born physically into a family: Can the child be unborn out of the family? What about a child of God? Can a child born into the family of God be unborn?

“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.” (John 6:37)

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:6)

This is our **standing** forever. Paul summed up our standing in **Romans 3:28**: *“Therefore we*

conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.”

Works has nothing at all to do with our **standing**. Works has everything to do with our **state**.

State

Our “state” or “condition” has to do with how we are doing after being saved, or “born again.” The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians regarding their **state**:

*“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your **state**. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your **state**.” (Philippians 2:19-20)*

Paul wanted to know how they were doing spiritually. Were they walking with the Lord? How was their welfare and conduct? How was their spiritual condition? Were they laboring and serving the Lord? Were the Philippians continuing to grow spiritually?

“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;” (Colossians 3:8-9)

Paul encouraged these believers to put off certain deeds of the flesh that are common to all men. This had to do with their “state” and not with their “standing”. This is all practical; it has to do

with our performance in the light of our God-given talents and capacity.

So many Christians confuse these two. They think their standing is their state, and something to be earned or gained by effort. Many believe that their state, or practical walk, determines their standing or position in the family of God. Many are confusing who they are by simple faith and acceptance of Christ with the way they are living, or their behavior. It is important not to confuse our standing with our Christian living.

An understanding of carnality helps to understand our standing and state. Paul spoke to carnality in the Christian life. **Romans 8:6-7** clearly distinguishes the carnally-minded with the spiritually-minded. To be carnally minded has to do with a Christian believer. A Christian can be dominated by the flesh. He can be carnal, or worldly.

- There is the carnal believer who is a babe and has not learned the Word – hasn't learned to live like a spiritual Christian;

- There is a carnal believer who should be mature but is willfully not surrendering his life to the Lord.

- There is the Christian who is spiritual, influenced and under the control of the Spirit, and “judges all things.”

Unfortunately, many believers do not understand “standing” and “state”, and they are disqualifying themselves from the race because of

this doctrinal confusion or error. (*I Corinthians 9:24-27*) They cannot grow and mature without understanding these doctrines.

Paul wanted those to whom he ministered to be clear about their standing or position in the family of God. He wanted believers in Jesus to understand that they are secure. We cannot feel secure unless we understand our standing and state.

To grow spiritually, we must know our relationship with Christ is secure. We are eternally saved; we have an eternal position, an eternal standing in the family of God. Our state has to do with our view of security.

“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.” (John 10:28-29)

You have to twist or pour the meaning out of words to conclude that you can lose your standing or position with or in Christ. This impacts our practical walk.

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (Hebrews 10:14)

Works have nothing at all to do with being saved or redeemed, or a believer's standing. However, works are very much connected to our state and the practical walk of the believer.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared

beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

Clearly, Paul speaks to the ordained works for the believer. Now, we all must get the “Mind of Christ” to know our specific ordained works for our own life. These works have to do with our state, or walk. The welfare, or the walk, of the believer may be carnal, as was the condition of the Corinthian believers, or it may be spiritual. Our state may be described as we read in **Romans 8**, where Paul outlined the carnally-minded and spiritually-minded.

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be”. (Romans 8:5-7)

Conclusion

What is our standing? Is it certain? How about our state? How are we doing?

Are we walking in the Spirit?

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked”. (1 John 2:6)

Are we yielding and surrendering to the Lord, or are we willfully rebellious to the revealed will and revelation of the Word of God?

We can know the Word and be opposed to it, just as a child naturally-speaking can know a parent's instructions and directions for a matter, and rebel. Have you ever noticed children or teenagers who are not being obedient? Have you noticed Christians rebelling?

Another aspect of a believer's state has to do with "Character and Conduct":

"Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you." (I Corinthians 4:18)

"And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you." (I Corinthians 5:2)

We can be puffed up, heady, or arrogant. There are a number of scriptures that have to do with our character or state or conduct.

"But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds," (Colossians 3:8-9)

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." (I Peter 2:11-12)

Our lives have to do with the Lord's completing the good work He has begun in us. Our lives (state)

will be subject to Divine review. There is a Judgment Seat of Christ that is future.

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” (Philippians 1:6)

It all starts with our standing, or position! Everything begins with salvation and being born again. Our standing is the beginning (genesis) for a newborn in God’s family. It all begins by acceptance of Christ as our Savior. Then, we can grow and mature as a baby does in the natural life. God continues to work on our character and conduct (condition.)

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.” (Philippians 3:12)

God’s desire is to bring our state up to our perfect and complete provisional standing in Christ. We are to grow in grace and knowledge (**II Peter 3:18**)

“This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.....And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.” (Titus 3:8, 14)

“Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting

covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13:20-21)

We know there are many hindrances to growing in grace. Our state can be hindered.

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (I Corinthians 9:24-27)

Paul had been saved for 25 years or more when he wrote about finishing his course and the possibility of his not qualifying to win the prize. He knew there were hindrances and obstacles to his becoming completed and perfected practically.

We know that bringing our state up to our standing does not happen immediately. It takes time. It is a lifelong career, or work. Although we can never love righteousness nor hate wickedness as completely as our Savior did, nevertheless we can follow His example and be transformed from glory to glory to a very significant degree. There

are those that will rule and reign with Christ.
(Romans 8:17)

“I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling, or upward call, in Christ Jesus. **(Philippians 3:14)** Sanctification is a continuing experience. Let us finish our course with joy and be victorious.

(Read **Acts 20**) Let us be sanctified wholly and be led of the Spirit.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” **(Romans 8:14)**

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” **(I Thessalonians 5:23)**

“...as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,” **(I Peter 1:14-15)**

In thinking about our state being conformed to our standing, Paul addresses the issue in **Romans 6:9-13** where he talks about “know”, “reckon”, and “yield.”

“Reckon” means “count or consider.” We are to count ourselves dead to sin. Because the Word says we are dead to sin, we are. He tells us to reckon it so. We agree with His Word. Even though there is the struggle, the way to victory is to agree with God and what He says about the matter.

*“**Knowing** that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.....Likewise **reckon** ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.....**yield** yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.” (Romans 6:9-13, KJV)*

Now, what about the next time I sin? Is my perfect **standing** in Christ affected? No! My standing is based on Christ’s perfection, not mine. But is my **state** affected? Yes, by my actions I show that I am not living up to the perfect standing that is mine in Christ, and my fellowship with Him is hindered. Then I must confess to Him and ask Him to help me live to please Him – to bring my state up closer to the level of my standing.

When we get this truth clear in our mind, what peace and rest it brings! Only then can we quit worrying about where we stand with God and begin to concentrate on growing in Him. Christians are to continually grow. We begin by understanding the truth regarding Standing and State.

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” (John 17:17)

Footnote: All scripture references in this article are quoted from the New King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise noted.

For more on the subject of Standing and State, please read the following tracts:

“Blessed Assurance” by F. E. Goodrick

“Changed” by Doug Crook

“Two Natures” by Norton Rainey, Jr.

“Doctrines of The Bible” by

O. A. Freestone, Jr.

(pp.28-30)

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