

What is the difference between "believing" and "receiving"?

- John 1:10-12 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But **as many as received Him**, to them **He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who **believe** in His name: **who were born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**.

There is a difference between a belief in Jesus Christ which "saves" and a belief in Him which only "condemns". The difference is framed or openly declared by the emotional response of the believer.

The critical difference between those different beliefs is observed in the resulting emotions which follows immediately upon the exercise of the belief that saves as opposed to the belief that condemns. When the belief in Jesus that saves is exercised, the believer RECEIVES the very Spirit of Christ which is the Holy Spirit. The RECEIVING of the Holy Spirit is a GIFT from God and is totally apart from any merit or works accomplished or performed by the Believer.

- Ephesians 2:4-10 But God, who is rich in mercy, **because of His great love with which He loved us**, even when we were dead in trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)**, and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For **by grace you have been saved through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The emotion of overwhelming JOY immediately follows reception of the saving gift of the Holy Spirit coming into a heart that believes and trusts in Jesus. Soon thereafter follows a desire to be BAPTIZED in open recognition of one's love for Jesus Christ. The desire to be baptized is a confirmation of the desire to follow Jesus wherever He leads. This emotional response is what some theologians call RECEIVING the gift of the Holy Spirit.

An intellectual belief ONLY in Jesus will not produce this "new-birth" nor the emotional response of Joy which prompts the desire to follow Jesus leading in one's life.

- James 2:19-24 You believe that there is one God. You do well. **Even the demons believe—and tremble!**

This kind of mental belief in Jesus is only an intellectual response to the historical truth about Jesus Christ, as opposed to a true belief in Jesus which saves a person.

- Acts 26:25-29 But he [Paul] said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? **I know that you do believe.**" Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You **almost persuade me to become a Christian.**" And Paul said, "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."

*Receiving can simply be explained as the action of obtaining something that **was not in the possession of the person**, but where an outside benefactor imparted something valuable to be treasured.*

Saving belief always involves Receiving the Spirit of Christ into the heart.

Receive typically means “get,” “be given,” or “be the recipient of” something. In this instance “receiving” is the action of obtaining, by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, a belief, trust and love for Jesus Christ.

The very Spirit of Jesus Christ is placed in the personality and soul of a person.

The soul or personality of a person is encased in the body. It is the soul that receives the Spirit of Christ that radically changes the belief system with which the individual now uses to make life choices.

The individual having received the Spirit of Christ NOW thinks like Christ, not perfectly yet in principle, i.e., “What Christ believes I believe, and that which Christ loves and hates I also love and hate, in principle and purposeful direction.

The first two and clearest evidences of this **new birth** are the overwhelming emotions of **sorrow** [repentance = recognition that my prior thoughts and actions caused the necessary death of the perfect Son of God to pay my death penalty due for my sins] and **elation** [this is due to the clear understanding that my sin debt has been paid by Jesus’ death and I have been judicially placed [accepted and adopted] into God’s eternal family as a son or daughter and will live forever with God in heaven upon my death on earth.

Mankind’s greatest problem is our Guilt and Fear. *We all know we have violated God’s pure holy commands having sinned against Holy God and harmed our neighbors often and deeply.*

When the Holy Spirit brings this inescapable realization into the heart, the reality of our guilt and fear overrides all other emotions. Simultaneously, when the Holy Spirit declares, “Yes, you are guilty and yes you have every reason to be full of fear, but God loves you. God loves you because you were made in His image. God does NOT love you **for anything you have done or can possibly do**, but **He loves you** for the fact that **He sees in you the possibility** that you can **choose** to be ‘**born again**’ and molded into the **very likeness of His Son Jesus.**”

This radical change of receiving the Spirit of Christ is called being “born again”. When this incredible truth becomes real in the heart and soul of the individual, overwhelming JOY immediately overwhelms the depths of guilt and fear which initiated the beginning of the “new birth” experience.

Following are clear examples of receiving and being born again. They believed in Jesus Christ and received Him as Lord and Savior. The Spirit of Christ indwelt them producing unrestrained JOY and the desire to be immediately baptized:

- Acts 8:35-39 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. **What hinders me from being baptized?**” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**” So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the

Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and **he went on his way rejoicing.**

- Acts 16:14-15 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. **The Lord opened her heart** to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when **she and her household were baptized**, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

- Acts 16:25-34 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and **fell down trembling** before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, **what must I do to be saved?**" So they said, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.**" Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately **he and all his family were baptized.**
34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and **he rejoiced**, having believed in God with all his household.

What happens to the heart upon receiving the Spirit of Christ in the new birth?

To us, Galatians 2 + Galatians 5 give us the greatest clarity of this new birth transformation where we exchange our lives for the life of Jesus Christ within us:

- Galatians 2:20 [The transformed/exchanged life] **I have been crucified with Christ**; it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- Galatians 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace**, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

What does this radical transformation look like?

We are "beside ourselves" and the "love of Christ compels us" to **Tell Somebody** of the reason for the NEW JOY we have within us. We are now prompted by our new indwelling Holy Spirit to want to be baptized and declare our relationship and allegiance to Jesus Christ.

- 2 Corinthians 5:13-15 For if **we are beside ourselves** it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. **For the love of Christ compels us**, because we judge thus: that if One died

for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

What is the fountainhead which produces our "supernatural JOY"?
The love of and for Jesus Christ which produces love for our neighbors.

We do not think it is possible to love anyone more deeply or with greater outward expressions of love than to simply tell them the Greatest Love Story Ever Told! The innocent [Jesus] died for the Guilty [you and me] so that the Guilty could be forgiven and live forever with Jesus in heaven in perfect love, joy and peace.

Your Great Question: What is the difference between "believing" and "receiving"?

Summary Answer: The difference is overwhelming joy is given to the one who believes and receives Jesus and is accompanied by an ardent desire to follow wherever He leads.

- Receiving Christ is simply the "free-will" decision that declares Jesus is right and I am wrong.
- This decision produces supernatural overwhelming joy and the desire to follow Jesus as our Lord, Savior and Friend.
- This JOY is produced through the birth of the Spirit of Christ in our hearts and NOT ONLY in our minds as an intellectual possibility, but as a life-changing internal emotional power.
- Receiving Jesus Christ comes through the Holy Spirit bringing about a love for Jesus Christ and full acceptance of what is written of Him in the Bible and captures ALL the WILL and EMOTIONS of a person.
- This radical change can only be equated to the miracle of natural birth. Natural birth occurs when a being is taken from "non-existence" into "living-existence" and everything about their prior existence has been changed.

This radical change is precisely why Jesus used natural birth as His illustration to declare what must happen to a person to be a "new member" of the eternal family of God.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, **unless one is born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It is a precious thing to be born naturally. It is a treasure beyond all comprehension to be born again, supernaturally.

One additional closing truth about JOY might be useful. The wonderful truth about JOY is that it is as infinite as our Creator. Not only are we brought into the "fullness of joy" at our own new birth, but, remarkably, our eternal JOY increases each time we tell somebody about Jesus! In heaven we will have unlimited JOY due in large part to our willingness to simply declare our own JOY about our relationship with Jesus Christ to other eternal souls.

One simple encouraging banner over the born-again Christ-follower has been summed up by this truth: "As a Christ-follower and Christ-lover, I am simply a Nobody, trying to tell Everybody about SOMEBODY [the Lord Jesus Christ] who can save Anybody."

This truth, dearest friends, is the recipe for the "fullness of JOY" which was begotten in our hearts by the Holy Spirit when we chose to RECEIVE Jesus Christ.

Will you BELIEVE and RECEIVE?

If you know the JOY we have spoken about in this note, we would be very pleased to hear of it.

If you do NOT have this JOY, we pray you will soon receive it by Believing and Receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord, Savior and Friend.

We prayed for you before sending this note to you. If you would like us to continue to pray for you, please send back to us your request to do so. It would be our privilege and part of our own JOY to do so.

All our love to All,

In Christ -
Jon + Philis + Friends @ WasItForMe.com