

and do not live holy lives. The state of Christians differs very much: **a)** Some are growing, some are still babes (2 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 3:1)); **b)** Some are spiritual, some are sinful (1 Corinthians 2:15; 3:4); **c)** Some are disciplined, some are disobedient (Matthew 11:29; Galatians 5:7); **d)** Some are victorious, and some struggle (Romans 6:13; 2 Timothy 4:10); **e)** Some are active for the Lord, and some are not so active (Colossians 4:12; Revelation 3:15-16). Remember, a believer's standing never changes because he is born again into God's forever family, but his State constantly changes and is often up and down.

5. Our STANDING comes from the fact that we are partakers of the divine nature and have that new nature [life] within. Our STATE comes from the fact that we still possess the old nature.

Although we receive a new nature when we are born again, we do not lose the old nature until we die or when Jesus returns to take us to heaven. Jesus taught that we *'must be born again'* (John 3:6); and that's the starting point. Then we must grow by the Holy Spirit, Bible Study, Prayer, and Christian Fellowship.

The New Testament further teaches, that we will struggle with the Old and New natures that live within us. The sinfulness of our hearts and minds will resist the Holy Spirit of God working in our lives. The Bible says, *"So I advise you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict. But since we now live by the Holy Spirit, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives."* (Galatians 5:16 -17, 25) [NLT]

6. All the blessings that have been bestowed upon us by virtue of our

STANDING in Christ are ours to enjoy now in our daily experience.

As believers we have been *"blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:3), and these blessings are ours to enjoy now. We **STAND** as sons of God (John 1:12), heirs with Jesus (Romans 8:17), justified (Romans 5:1), forgiven (Colossians 1:14) and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Our **STATE** means that as members of God's family, we can enjoy these riches now, and go about living as children of the King. We are to let his Holy Spirit preside over our minds, emotions, and will, so that we do what God asks us to do (Titus 3:1-15).

Knowing our **STANDING** before God opens up the Bible to us. We see and respond freely to the promises of God. When we sin we confess it (1 John 1:9) and we regain a **STATE** of wonderful fellowship with God. We draw near to our loving heavenly father, rather than run away and hide in disgust and guilt.

Enjoyment in the Christian life comes from the realisation of your **STANDING** with God which moves you to develop a good **STATE**, where you daily experience fellowship with God and enjoy his presence and power.

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*The Christian's
Standing and
State*



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S T A T E

(Colossians 3: 1-17)

Many Christians become discouraged in the early stages of their Christian life, and even lack the assurance of their salvation. Often this is because they do not understand the teaching of the Bible concerning our study today. It is most important that every believer should know the difference between his **STANDING** and his **STATE**; between his **POSITION** and his **CONDITION**. There are at least seven wonderful truths expounded in God's Word, all of which relate to the believer; they might be called "**Things that differ**" - and happy is the Christian who can distinguish these things!

There are differences:

- (1) between law and grace;
- (2) between faith and works;
- (3) between believers and professors;
- (4) between the old nature and the new nature;
- (5) between salvation and rewards;
- (6) between the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Judgment of the Great White Throne;
- (7) **the difference between the believer's standing and his state.**

What do we mean by the believer's STANDING and his STATE?

1. Our STANDING is what we are in Christ before God; our STATE is what we are in experience, in our daily life in the world and before others.

When a person believes in Jesus Christ they enter into a new relationship with God and are given a totally new standing - "*in Christ*". Our *standing*, therefore, is all that we are in God's reckoning by virtue of our union with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Our standing in Christ is absolutely perfect; just as He is perfect, so God reckons us as perfect, because we believe in Him and belong to Him. But as to our *state*,

how far from perfect that is! Standing and State is very Biblical. Let me give you a few verses from the NKJB mentioning **STANDING AND STATE**.

STANDING - "*By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.*" (1Peter 5:12) "*Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand.*" (1Corinthians 15:1).

STATE - "*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). "*Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:11-13).

2. Our STANDING will never change, it cannot improve or deteriorate, and it can never alter; our STATE is constantly changing, though it should be improving all the time.

This is wonderful to know! Once we are born again (John 3:3), and are baptised by the Holy Spirit into Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), nothing can ever alter this because, "***If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.***" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Our standing is secure; but our state is always changing. Sometimes we experience victory, and sometimes defeat; sometimes we experience joy, but sometimes gloom; sometimes we experience peace, and

sometimes anxiety.

Why? Because we have within us two natures - the old nature we inherited from Adam and the new divine nature, we have by our relationship to Christ. Since we have not arrived in heaven yet, we are still living in the old body with the old mind that is tainted with sin. But our standing in Christ is forever settled, and nothing can ever alter it.

3. Our salvation and our acceptance before God depend upon our STANDING, and not upon our STATE.

Our salvation does not depend upon what we are in ourselves, but upon what Christ is and what He has done for us. This is so difficult for some people to understand, believe and enjoy. It is easy to give in to fear and guilt and think that what we have done wrong has removed us from God's family, that all of a sudden we are lost. This is not the case!!

The Bible teaches that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. When Paul and Silas were in Jail at Philippi, God caused a great earthquake to set them free. We read that, "*The jail warden, 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* (Acts 16:30-31). This is the beginning of an eternal **STANDING** with God, because all who believe in Christ are 'joint heirs with Jesus' and as sons and daughters of God are said to be spiritually "*in Christ*" (Ephesians 2:6-10), or united with Christ forever and nothing can ever alter that (Romans 8:1).

4. Every believer has exactly the same STANDING, though each has a different STATE.

In God's sight every believer is a saint (Romans 1:7), and is already perfect in Christ (Hebrews 10:10,14); but often we do not live like saints