

THE MANUFACTURER'S MANUAL

Every item on the market such as refrigerators, automobiles, washers, dryers, etc. all come with a little packet to aid us. It's called the Manufacturer's Manual. It aids in preventive maintenance and if something goes wrong — curative or repair maintenance instructions are given. It answers questions of why, how, when, what, where, etc. and gives much pertinent information. Of course, the manual doesn't do much good until first we've bought the refrigerator or the car. But it can show us that it would be nice to have such a wonderful product.

When God put us here, He knew we would have questions and problems — that things wouldn't always work smoothly and properly — that there would be many whys, hows, whats, whos, wheres, whens, etc. So God — the Manufacturer, left us a Manual. In it, He warns us four times — don't add, don't subtract — just follow these simple guides and instructions. I don't want you to be hurt — I want you to enjoy yourself. All the answers are in the Manual — so READ it!

As I began to read the manual I received a real jolt. The Manual said I was "out of order". It was like going to the doctor and hearing him say: "Floyd, you have a fatal illness, but proper treatment can completely cure you". "But Doc — I don't FEEL sick". "No matter, the tests show conclusively that you are ill", he replies.

Since he's an expert in his field, I have little choice but to take his word for it. After all, effective cure depends upon an accurate diagnosis. But after the diagnosis, I have to submit myself to the treatment. The Manual (God, the Doc) says we have a problem — the problem is called sin. It's a fatal malady with only one known cure.

I couldn't quite face up to the fact that the Manufacturer said I was out of order. I told myself there had to be some good in me. But where was it?

It takes a long time for most to learn that Christ didn't die for good people. He died for sinners. He says in the Manual that: "... all have sinned ... there is none righteous, no, not one".

When I looked at the Manufacturer's Manual and then looked in the mirror, that guy looked back at me and said: "The Manufacturer knows all about you. He's right." I had to finally come to the conclusion that, in spite of what I had been taught, the One who made me knew me. And He was speaking the truth. That was bad news. When I saw His estimation of me was correct, I realized I was in trouble. Now what do I do?

I said: "Well — I'll turn over a new leaf. I'll get this straightened out". So my program began as one of rehabilitation. I thought, "I'll straighten out my life and turn over a new leaf; everything will be all right". But as I continued to read farther into the Manual, another shock came. This one set me back on my heels. The Manual told me that by the unmerited favor of God we are put in order through faith, and that is not of ourselves, it is the free gift of God, not by rehabilitation (not by works) lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I thought, "That is a fine thing to tell a fellow. Tell him he is out of order, and then tell him he can't do a thing about getting back in order!" That didn't set very easy with me because my idea of having my good works outweigh my bad works had just been thrown right out the window. I was in a helpless situation.

And that's exactly where I find many people today. They are absolutely convinced that they are imperfect and are incapable of correcting the situation. Like I was, they are in a dilemma!

The answer is: CONTINUE TO READ THE MANUAL. The Manufacturer knows all about this condition and has prepared a way — a corrective remedy!

I noticed something unusual. He didn't send an authorized repairman, or set up a service station for repairs. The Manual says the Manufacturer came *in person* (Isa.9:6; Col.1:16) to extricate me from my calamity – the maker came Himself! That somebody would have that much interest in me sounded unbelievable. The One who made me came to get me out of the hole that I got myself into. That's why Jesus Christ is called the Saviour. He, alone, as the Manufacturer, has the technical ability to make a man all over again. In His technical language, He calls it "being Born Again".

Amazing! And if you want an answer book, here is the Book. Ask this book a question, and it comes back with an answer. If you don't want answers, don't ask this book – because it will talk back to you. It spoke back to me and said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be put in order". At first I said, "I believe in Christ. He was a historical figure". That's not the same as turning from sin trusting Him as the Creator, so nothing happened. My life didn't change. I thought, "maybe this just doesn't work for me". (Sound familiar?)

Then the Manual pointed out to me that there are two kinds of believers. Now that really surprised me. I thought everybody just fit in one classification. No sir! This Manual says there are two kinds of believers. The Manual says, "You believe in one God. Congratulations, even the demons believe that much – and it makes them tremble" (James 2:19).

But then I read in another portion of the Manual about a different group who were "of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39). I had to take an inventory of my life to discover into which of the two categories I fit. I had to admit I fit the classification of a "trembling" believer.

I found another fact. This Manual pointed out that to put a nice facade over my character and fool the people around me would not correct my deficiency for living in the real world, nor would it prepare me for Eternity. The Manual made it clear that "as many as received Jesus Christ, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12-13). I finally came to understand that believing Christ died is just history — but believing that Christ died for me is salvation.

One day I made a *personal application* of all this information. Christ Jesus revolutionized my life completely. He gave me a reason for being here, a purpose for living. He gave me an objective. He settled my eternal destiny — all because I acted upon the Manufacturer's instructions.

It is an exhilarating experience to live a new life with Christ as its source and power. It works every day. You ask, "But how can I be sure it will happen to me – that it will work for me?"

Listen. In business we have an annual plague called the public auditors. They want to know all about the year — what's happened, what's going on, why did you do this or that. You know the questions they ask. If everything is in order, they give you what they refer to as a clean certificate – an absolutely unqualified, unconditional opinion.

God, the Master Businessman of the universe, employs the exact techniques to answer your questions. The Bible declares: "If any man belongs to Christ, been made a new creature by being born again, old things pass away, behold all things become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

As you audit your life, answer these questions: has the Manufacturer, God, made you all over again? Check yes or no. Have you been made a new person (new creatures have no past, only a future)? Check yes or no. If you are unable to certify that this transaction has occurred, you can remedy this right now. The solution is easy. You remedy the problem by repenting and receiving Christ Jesus on a personal basis, and you'll receive God's unqualified, unconditional opinion — His clean certificate. Then you can begin the most fulfilling life man can know. Continuing to read and follow the instructions in the Manufacturer's Manual will point you to the Maker and your having a personal relationship with Him. It's all about Him. You don't have to remain out-of-order another day.

I'm sure glad for the day I first trusted the Manufacturer and started to follow the Manual.