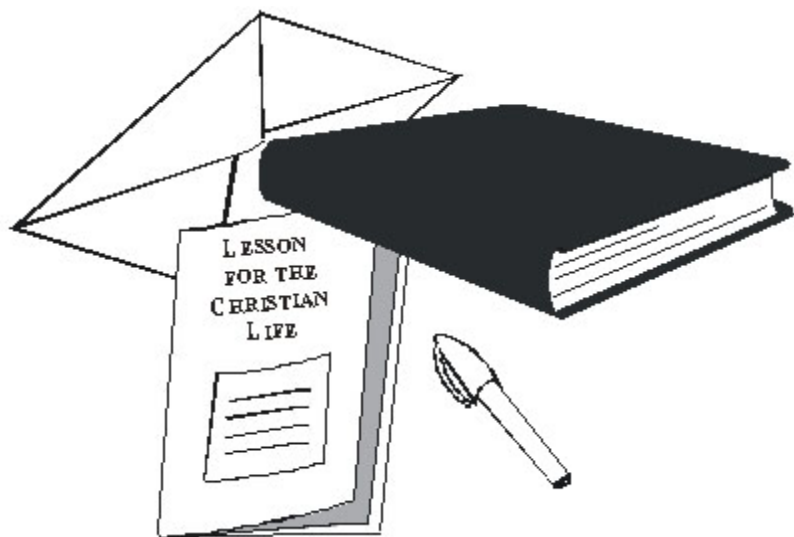


# LESSONS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



*A COURSE FOR CORRESPONDENCE STUDY*

Dear Student,

It is a joy to offer you this course of the Word of God. Your textbook is the New Testament. It relates the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. We hope the course will please you and be a help to your life.

The course has a section of exams in the middle of this book. In page 2 of the exams you will find detailed instructions for study of this course.

## ***THE RESULTS OF REGENERATION***

What really happens when someone is born again?

First, a person understands that he is a lost sinner and deserves to spend eternity in Hell. (Only the Holy Spirit can make one understand this.) Then he repents of his sins. In other words, he recognizes before God that he is a sinner and needs a Saviour. He accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, and at that moment he is born again, his sins are forgiven, and he receives eternal life from God.

But that is only a small part of the story. It is just the beginning. We learn from the Bible, that when God saves a person, many wonderful things happen. Here is a list of ten amazing realities.

1. To start with, the believer is accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6); this means that he is in the presence of God with all the acceptability that His beloved Son has. God sees him as in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17). It also means that the Christian is welcome to be in the presence of God at any time that Christ is welcome; of course, this means always (Ephesians 2:6, 7).
2. He is also made a Son of God (John 1:11,12). Can you imagine how honored you would feel if you became the son of a famous ruler here on earth? How much greater an honor to be the son of the powerful Maker of the universe, before whom the angels bow (Galatians 3:26)!
3. He is justified by God (Romans 5:1; 8:30,33). God, the judge, declares the sinner who believes “JUSTIFIED” and sees him as if he had never sinned. God can do this because Christ has died as a substitute and has carried all the punishment that the Christian would have suffered. In this way, the Christian is presented “not guilty” in the sight of God and will never be punished for his sins (Romans 8:1).
4. He is changed into a temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19). The Bible teaches us clearly that God the Holy Spirit actually lives in every believer (I John 4:13). The body of the Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is because of this sacred privilege that the child of God should be careful with what he says, what he does, and where he goes.
5. He becomes a member of the family of God (John 1:12). Now he can be Scripturally baptized. Then he can become a member of a local church (Acts 2:41,47). Just as the church at Colosse was the “body of Christ,” a Christian can become a part of the “body of Christ” by joining a local church (Colossians 1:18,24).
6. He becomes an heir of God (Romans 8:17). God is the Creator of the uni-

verse and He is the owner of all things. He has promised the children of God that, one day, they will reign with Christ over the earth and then they will own all things.

7. He becomes a saint (Romans 1:7). The Bible calls those that are saved, "saints". A saint is one who has been set apart for God by the Holy Spirit (Psalms 4:3). In the eyes of God, every Christian is a saint, because God sees him through Christ and Christ is absolutely holy (I Corinthians 1:2).
8. He is complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10). The Christian is perfect before God. He is as close to and as loved by God as Christ is. When a person has Christ, he has all that is necessary for a happy life and eternity.
9. He receives a divine nature (II Peter 1:4). He will soon notice that he has new desires, new ambitions, a new hate for sin, and a new love for his Christian brethren. When this divine nature is fed by the Christian, he will become more and more like the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:10; II Corinthians 3:18). This is God's plan for each one of His children.
10. He immediately begins to enjoy the constant protection of God (Romans 8:28). Nothing can occur to a Christian without the permission of God. In other words, there are no accidents in the life of a Christian. Everything that happens to a child of God is for his own good. Even trials, tribulations, and punishments work for his spiritual benefit (Romans 5:3-5).

Therefore, a true Christian truly has a marvelous life. In view of these marvelous provisions made by God, every Christian should show his appreciation in two ways:

1. He should never stop praising God for the salvation he has through the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. He should give his life in voluntary service to Him Who gave His life on the cross of Calvary (Romans 12:1).

## **SECURITY OF SALVATION**

How can a person know for sure that he is saved?

Read and meditate on the following points until you have completely understood them.

1. The Bible is the Word of God. It is absolutely right. You can totally rely upon it.
2. The Bible says that if you repent of your sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved.
3. The question now is, have you ever been to Jesus as a sinner and asked Him to save you? Have you ever accepted Him as the Substitute who paid the penalty of your sins?
4. If you have, God says that you are saved.

In other words, and it is very important that you understand this well, security of salvation is obtained by the Scriptures. This truth is clearly taught in I John 5:13. Every Christian should memorize this verse: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

Notice the significance of the word that is underlined. John wrote to those who had believed in Christ so that they would know that they had eternal life. If you have believed in Christ, you are saved. The Bible assures you of it.

The problem that a lot of people have with this is that they depend on their feelings rather than the Bible. They say, "I don't feel saved." They expect a mysterious emotional experience, and when they don't get it, they doubt that they have been saved. The person who bases the security of his salvation on feelings is assured of having difficulties since his feelings are always changing from one moment to the next. The Word of God, however, does not change. Trust in the Bible and not in your feelings.

But, sometimes you might ask yourself, "Isn't a Christian supposed to feel happy?" No doubt about it, the answer is, "Yes!" However, one has to know that he is saved before he can have that joy. First comes the assurance, then the feelings. We know that we are saved because the Bible tells us. We are happy because we know that we are saved.

Besides the Scriptures, there are other means of assurance of salvation for the believer. Here are three proofs that confirm that a person is saved:

1. A saved person loves his Christian brethren (I John 3:14).
2. A saved person has the testimony of the Holy Spirit within him (I John 5:10; Romans 8:16).

3. A saved person hates sin and loves right. Despite the fact that a Christian can commit sin, sin does not control his life (Romans 6:19). He does not live in continuous practice of sin.

As the believer grows in his Christian life, the sense of assurance will grow stronger every day. There are three clear steps that will guarantee this:

1. Read the Bible regularly and believe it with all your heart.
2. Ask the Lord to fortify your faith as you read His Holy Word.
3. Tell others of Him Who has saved you from sin.

Finally, there is a little useful advice for those who aren't sure that they were ever saved and who really want that assurance. Maybe you think that in the past you might have trusted in the Saviour, but aren't exactly sure if you did or not. If you want to have that assurance, here's what you should do. Tell the Lord that you aren't sure that you have been saved, but that you now desire to be saved. Tell Him that you know that you are a lost sinner and that if you died in your present condition, you would go to hell. Then receive the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, believing that He died on the cross of Calvary to take away all punishment for your sins and believing that He can, and will, save you.

Now, read Acts 16:31. What does it say will happen if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? It says, "thou shalt be saved." It is the Word of God. BELIEVE IT. When Satan comes to you and tries to make you doubt your salvation, read Acts 16:31; John 1:12; 3:36; 5:24; or Romans 10:9. Show Satan that GOD says that you are saved because you have believed in Christ. If you show him the Scriptures, he will soon not bother you with any more doubts.

## ***PERMANENT PRESERVATION***

Can a saved person perish?

If someone has truly been born again, he will never perish. The believer is saved and safe forever. As evidence of this glorious truth, seven Scripture passages are listed, although many more could be mentioned. (The student should study each one carefully.)

1. John 10:27-29 - Notice these words of Christ, "And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish." Plant yourself firmly in this truth. This is an unconditional promise from Christ. None of his sheep will ever perish! Observe, also, that both Christ and the Father keep you safe.
2. John 5:24 - Here the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking again. He promises that the person who hears His Word and believes on Him Who sent him, has eternal life and will never see eternal condemnation. If a believer would ever become lost, then the Son of God would have failed in His promise.
3. John 3:36 - "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Notice that it doesn't say "will have eternal life." But, he has it at the present time. Now, what amount of time is meant by "eternal"? Clearly, it means that it is forever.
4. Romans 8:38,39 - The Apostle Paul tells us that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor heights, nor depths, can separate the Christian from the love of God. And so that no child of God will worry that he might separate himself from God's love, Paul adds, "nor any other creature." The believer is as sure as God can make him.
5. II Timothy 1:12 - Paul expresses here his confidence that Christ is capable of guarding and maintaining that which was committed to His care. This means, his soul. In John 6:39, we read that God has given to Christ the preservation of all the believers. Is it possible for Christ to be unfaithful to that which was committed to Him?
6. Jude 24 - The Lord Jesus is the only one who can keep the Christians from falling and take them safely to their home in Heaven. Christians are not able to maintain their salvation just like they were not able to acquire it on their own in the first place; but Christ is capable (I Peter 1:5).
7. Romans 8:30 - "And whom he justified, them he also glorified." Every saved person is also glorified. Even though Christians do not possess their glorified bodies, it is such a sure thing that God speaks of it as if it were already done. If you are justified, then as far as God is concerned, you are also glorified. In other words, the Christian is as sure of going to heaven as if he were already there.

In connection of the theme of the security of the Christian, the following factors should be taken into account:

1. A Christian does not lose his salvation when he sins. Christ has already paid for his sins; past, present, and future. God will not demand payment twice. Since Christ died for my sins, I will not have to die for them. God, the just Judge, forgives the sinner who believes in Christ.
2. But when a Christian sins, he offends his Heavenly Father and the happy relationship that should exist between a child and his father is broken until that sin is confessed (I John 1:9). Notice that there is a great difference in relationships existing between God the Judge and the sinner, and God the Father and the son who errs. In the first case, the payment for sin is death and hell. In the second case, the result of sin is interrupted communion (I John 2:1,2).
3. That same Christian cannot sin without some consequences. If a child of God distances himself from the Father, he should expect correction (Hebrews 12:6,7). The Father may use sadness or suffering to bring him around. In some cases, God may even take the believer to heaven. His body dies, but his soul is saved (I Corinthians 5:5).
4. While a Christian can and does commit acts of sin, no true child of God lives a continuous life of sin. It isn't that a Christian does not sin, but rather that he sins less. If a person can continue sinning without turning to God and being punished, this is an obvious sign that he never was born again in the first place. Our guarantee of salvation should not be an excuse for sinning, but rather an incentive not to sin.
5. There are several verses in the Bible which seem to indicate that a Christian can become lost. However, if we examine these verses carefully, we will notice that they refer to those who only pretend to be Christians or those who know the way of salvation, but have rejected it. In no place of Scripture does it say that he who is truly born again will perish.

## ***TRIUMPH OVER TEMPTATION***

How can a Christian resist sinful temptations?

The battle between right and wrong starts as soon as a person is saved. He still has the old nature, the sinful nature of Adam, which tries to drag him constantly into sin. But he also has a new nature, the divine nature, which hates sin and desires to do right. A continuous battle rages between the two natures (Galatians 5:16,17; Romans 8:5-8).

The old nature is incurably bad. It cannot be improved nor will it be removed until the Christian goes to his home in heaven. God condemned it when Christ died on the cross and He wants Christians to treat it as if it were dead. Don't encourage it! Don't feed it! Don't give it any opportunities (Romans 13:14)! The new nature inspires the Christian to do what is right. It should be encouraged and fed.

This is the manner in which the Christian resists temptation--Saying "No!" to the flesh, or the old nature, and feeding the new life that is within him. The following are a few practical suggestions about how you can do this:

1. Read the Bible! Study it! Memorize it! Meditate on it! Obey it! Read Psalms 119:9 and 11. We learn there, that the Word of God teaches how to avoid sin. Assure yourself to get away daily for a time of reading the Word of God (Colossians 3:16).
2. Pray! Whenever you are tempted, ask God to help you (Hebrews 4:16). He will give you the power to conquer temptation (I Corinthians 10:13). If you try to resist temptation with your own strength, it is unavoidable that you fail.
3. Seek out the company of other Christians and not sinners (Proverbs 1:10-16; Hebrews 10:24-25). Very often it is necessary to work with and live among unbelievers, and in those cases, we should testify as much with our lips as with our life that we are Christ's. We should not share the worldly pleasures and vices any more (Ephesians 5:11).
4. Confess your sins immediately. Just as soon as you are conscious of offending your Father through a thought, deed, or word, you should ask His forgiveness immediately. Don't wait until the end of the day or week to do it (Proverbs 28:13).
5. Keep busy in work for the Lord! Someone has said that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. Give your mind and body to the Lord and let Him use it as He wishes (Romans 6:19). There is much to do and you are serving the Master of masters.
6. Occupy yourself in physical exercise! Corporal exercise is profitable (I Timothy 4:8). Since the body of the believer is the temple of the Holy

Spirit, you should take appropriate measures to keep it strong and healthy. However, you should not allow sports to occupy such an important place in your life that it replaces spiritual things.

7. Don't give any ground to the old nature! Be careful what you read, what you see, where you go, and what you hear (Colossians 3:5-9).
8. Feed the new nature. Occupy yourself with Christ! When you are thinking of Him, you cannot think of sin (Colossians 3:10-14). Occupying your mind with Christ is the true secret for holy living. It is a rule of life that we begin to be like that which we worship. II Corinthians 3:18 teaches us that we will be like Christ in as much as we look at Him through the mirror of His Word. We are transformed into His image by the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us.

A FINAL WORD! You will notice by what has been said that being free from temptation is not a one-time-only experience; but it is a continuous process of depending upon God. It doesn't matter how long we have been a Christian or even how much we know of the Bible, we are still in danger of giving in to temptation if we take our eyes away from our Lord (Colossians 3:1-4).

## CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

How can a Christian know what he should or should not do?

Is it proper for a Christian to go to dances or movie theaters, to gamble, smoke, drink, or participate in other worldly pleasures?

Many Christian young people are worried about the above-mentioned things and many other similar activities. They find certain practices are openly condemned in the Bible, but many others are not even mentioned. The purpose of this lesson is to provide the student with a guideline that will help him decide whether he should participate in doubtful activities.

1. First of all, is it something that the Lord prohibits the Christian to do? If it is, then avoid it like a mortal plague. If you're not sure, don't do it until you have the opportunity to check it out (I Thessalonians 5:22).
2. Next, does God get the glory from it? In I Corinthians 10:31 we read the following statement, "do all to the glory of God." Before you engage in any questionable activity, can you honestly ask God to bless it, believing that He will be honored by your participation in such a thing?
3. Is it of the world? If it is, then it isn't of Christ. He said of His disciples, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16). He was not "of the world" in any manner. He was in the world, but not a part of it (I John 2:15-17).
4. Would the Lord have done it? He has left an example so that we can follow His footsteps (I Peter 2:21).
5. Would you like to be doing that activity the moment the Lord returns? Someone wisely said, "Don't do anything, don't say anything, don't go to any place that would embarrass you if the Lord returned in that instant." (I John 2:28).
6. Can you do it freely realizing that God, the Holy Spirit, dwells in you? "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (I Corinthians 6:19).
7. Is it conduct becoming to a child of God? When the son of a king conducts himself improperly and without dignity, he brings shame upon his father's name. The same occurs when a Christian acts improperly (Romans 2:24; Colossians 1:10).
8. What effect will it have on others? Will it be a good testimony to the unbelievers, or will it cause them to think that there is no difference between a Christian and an unbeliever (II Corinthians 5:17)? Also, will it be a stumblingblock to one who is young in the faith? The apostle Paul

has warned that no man should be a stumblingblock to his brother (Romans 14:13).

9. Finally, is there any doubt in your mind about the activity? If there is, don't do it, because "he that doubteth is damned" since "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." (Romans 14:23).

In considering this theme of what a Christian should and should not do, it is good to remember that "ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Romans 6:14,15). This does not mean that we can do whatever we want, but rather that we should want to do what pleases God because of what He has done for us. We should avoid worldly pleasures and distractions because we want to avoid them. The reason we want to avoid them is that Christ died for us and we want to live in a manner that will please Him (II Corinthians 5:14,15). God does not say that we are Christians because we stay away from worldly pleasures. But He does say to the Christian: you're a Christian, "walk worthy of the vocation wherein ye are called." (Ephesians 4:1). It is possible that a Christian forgets his high position and stoops to the things of this world. In such a case, God will bring him back through loving correction, just as a shepherd puts his staff around the wayward lamb. Therefore, if the Christian forgets the grace of God, he will be restored by the strength of God.

Let us not forget that this also obligated us to be careful in imposing laws of conduct on others. We should not judge our brethren by our own standards and cultural traditions (Romans 14:4). However, if the Word of God judges such an action in the life of a brother, we should not ignore it.

## **WHAT IS BAPTISM AND WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?**

Before the Lord Jesus went up into Heaven, He gave His disciples the great commandment, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:19,20)

It was the desire of God that, as the disciples went around the world preaching the gospel, that they baptize those that accepted the message. Baptism is an ordinance instituted by the Lord Himself. This then leads us to two questions: First, how is the ordinance of baptism practiced? Second, what does baptism mean?

In order to find the proper answer to the first question, let’s read Acts 8:26-39. Here we find a servant of the queen of Ethiopia who was traveling in a chariot and reading the Old Testament, Isaiah chapter 54. This man was sincerely searching for the truth so God instructed His servant Philip to speak to him. Philip told him how the Lord Jesus had died on the cross of Calvary to save sinners. The traveler believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and then he asked Philip if he could be baptized. Since the man had truly believed in Christ, Philip agreed to baptize him. The chariot was stopped near a pool of water (and notice carefully verses 38 and 39), “...and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.” Without a doubt, this refers to total immersion in water and not just being sprinkled. In every instance where baptism is mentioned in Scripture, it speaks of immersion.

Now, what is the significance of this simple ceremony that was carried out on a middle-eastern road many centuries ago, and is still being performed today?

1. First, it is an act of obedience to the declared will of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:19). Its purpose is not to wash away the filth of the flesh, but to give to the Christian a good conscience toward God, knowing that he has obeyed His will (I Peter 3:21). Only those who have heard the Gospel and believed it can be baptized (Acts 18:8).
2. Secondly, Romans 6:3-5 teaches us that it is a symbol or picture of a spiritual truth:
  - a.) Water is a picture of judgment and death.
  - b.) When Christ died, he was buried under the waters of judgment and death to pay for our sins (Psalms 42:7).

- c.) Since Christ died as a substitute for the believer, that means that the believer died with the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, when Christ died, I died. When He was buried, I was buried. When He was raised from the dead, I was raised from the dead.
  - d.) The Christian has died to sin, the world, and himself. He has died to all that he did by nature; and from now on, God does not see his sins. He only sees Christ (Galatians 2:20).
  - e.) Therefore, when a Christian is baptized, he makes a public confession that he is taking his place with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection; from then on he will try to demonstrate to all that he possesses Christ within.
3. The person who truly has been baptized is one who not only has literally been baptized in water, but also demonstrates with his life that the flesh, or old nature, has been put to death. Baptism should be just as much a condition of the heart as it is an external profession of belief.

In the early days of the church, when a believer was baptized, many times he was persecuted or even assassinated. Even so, many others were saved and took the place of those early martyrs. Today, in many pagan countries, baptism is the signal for the start of a terrible persecution. In many lands, a belief in Christ is tolerated as long as one only confesses Christ orally. But when a public confession is made through baptism, the enemies of the cross initiate a war against the believer.

But, whatever the cost, everyone who is Scripturally baptized enjoys the same experience that the Ethiopian eunuch had. The Bible says that, “he went on his way rejoicing.” (Acts 8:39).

“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” (John 13:17).

## ***HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN KNOW WHERE TO CONGREGATE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS?***

As an introduction to this subject, we should establish the fact that a person is made a child of God at the very moment of his conversion (John 1:12,13). This family of God is formed by all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ without distinction between race, culture, or color.

Christ organized His church during His earthly ministry with His disciples. In Acts chapter 2, we find how the church received its power through the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In Scripture we find over 100 references to the church. In practically all these references, it speaks of a local group of Christians who were congregating regularly. A church is of Christ and its members gather to worship and serve the Lord. In the early days of these churches, the saints gathered in their own homes (Romans 16:5; Philemon 2). We find that, “they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Now, it is very evident that the Lord wants Christians to gather regularly as members of a local congregation. Hebrews 10:25 contains a warning, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” Also, great portions of the New Testament are dedicated to teaching Christians the privileges and responsibilities that one has as a member of the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12).

However, the new Christian of today has the problem of knowing with which congregation he must choose to meet. There are so many different Christian groups with so many distinctions in their teachings. The following list has been compiled with the purpose of helping the young Christian find the right way. At the same time, we must emphasize that this choice should be made with intense prayer, so that the will of God is followed. Our knowledge as to what is the proper church, should only come from the Bible. The customs and traditions of men should only be followed if they agree with what the Bible says (Isaiah 8:20).

1. Make sure that whatever group you consider recognizes the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God, and submits itself to those Scriptures as the **ONLY** authority for rules of faith and practice. It isn't enough to say that the Bible contains the Word of God. It **IS** the Word of God. Therefore, the Bible is absolutely true and we must cling to it in belief and obedience (II Timothy 3:16,17).
2. Make sure that the church you attend has a clear and unequivocal concept of the true Person of Christ. Many are willing to admit that Christ was

a great hero and one of the greatest men of all times. Some might even call Him “Divine”, but the fact that He is our beloved Saviour and that He is God is the only true concept of Jesus (Colossians 2:9).

3. A third point that one must watch for in looking for a church concerns the work of Christ. The Scriptures teach us that the Lord Jesus Christ lived a life without sin, that He died voluntarily for our sins on the cross of Calvary, that he was buried and rose again, that He ascended into heaven, and that he is now at the right hand of God the Father interceding for the believer (I Corinthians 15:1-40. Salvation can be obtained only through faith in Him, not by good works or human merit (Galatians 1:6-9). Make sure that the church teaches that the precious blood of Christ is what cleanses man from sin. Without His blood there can be no remission of sin.
4. Make sure that the church can trace its doctrines and practices back to the churches in the New Testament. Many men have established churches over the years either as reformers of bad doctrine or as teachers of new truths. God revealed all truth even to the early church, therefore, we should not be looking for new doctrines or revelations. If a church or denomination can trace its teachings and practice to one man, then we should stay clear of it.

Besides the four main tests that we just gave, one should also make sure the church does not contradict Biblical teachings, and practices the following important truths regarding the Christian.

1. Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18,19; Ephesians 1:22,23). No man can claim such a position. Wherever Christ is recognized as the head, the congregation will look to Him, and only Him, for orders and guidance.
2. All believers are part of the family of God (John 1:12,13). They should be received as members of the church after submitting to baptism. (There are two exceptions to this: those whose doctrine is not sound, II John 10, and those who are living in sin, I Corinthians 5:13. These should not be considered as true children of God.) No unbeliever should be received as a member, even if he is baptized.
3. All Christians are priests (I Peter 2:5,9). In the New Testament, there is no distinction between priest and congregation. All Christians can now enter by faith into the presence of God, bringing sacrifices of praise, worship, and service. In the early church, all members were students of the Bible, all were soul-winners, and all were busy for God. This should be true in every local church today.
4. The authority of the Holy Spirit should be recognized. Whether it be in worship, service, ministry, or discipline; there should be freedom for the Holy

Spirit to operate. His guidance and ministry should not be limited by man's ceremony or human organization (II Corinthians 3:17: Ephesians 4:3).

In review, the young Christian should have fellowship with those who have the Bible as their only guide, who teach the truth of the person and work of Christ, and who try to fulfil the teachings of the New Testament as to the church and its functions.

## ***DESIRING THE WILL OF GOD***

Can a Christian know the will of God for His life?

Every Christian should have great interest in knowing God's will for his life. If one does not know and obey the Lord's plan for his life, then that life is wasted and loses the "well done" from the Master.

The Scriptures are emphatic in the teaching that God reveals His will to those who want to know it (John 7:17). This is a privilege that should be the normal experience for every Christian (Romans 12:2).

Whether one is looking for direction for a monetary problem or for life's career, the following five steps should be followed:

1. **SUBMISSION**-Submission is presenting yourself to the Lord. It means to set aside hopes, ambitions, and personal desires. It means to totally desire God's will. Paul submitted when he said, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Isaiah submitted when he said, "Here am I; send me." (Isaiah 6:8). Amasiah submitted because we read that he willingly gave himself to Jehovah (II Chronicles 17:16).
2. **CONFESSION**-If we desire to be in the center of His will, we must confess and set aside any secret sin that we harbor. Remember the words of the Psalmist, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." (Psalms 66:18). We must also confess our lack of power and ability, and depend on his power (Psalms 139:23,24).
3. **PRAYER**-This simply means that we should come to the Lord regularly, asking for His direction. We must claim His promise of guidance, asking Him to do what He has said. Our prayers should have His glory as the main objective (Colossians 1:9; 4:12).
4. **STUDY**-Spend time in the Word of God. Read it when you are on your knees asking God to talk to you through it. Read it slowly. Read it with meditation. Read it with great anticipation (Psalms 119:18; 129:136).
5. **WATCH**-If God does not answer immediately, stay fast (Psalms 62:6). If you have prayed asking for God's direction and no answer comes, then God's will is that you stay where you are. If you are truly trusting in the Lord, you won't be worried. "He that believeth shall not make haste." (Isaiah 28:16). God can reveal His will in many different ways.

God may use one or a combination of the following methods to reveal His will.

1. **Guidance through the Bible.** The Scriptures give guidance in two ways: First, they explicitly prohibit certain courses of action. For example, if a Christian would pray asking for guidance on whether he should marry an

unbeliever, he would find God's answer in II Corinthians 6:14. On the other hand, God uses verses of Scripture to guide us into taking a definite course of action. A verse that has never before attracted your attention could acquire new meaning because it says something that applies at the moment you are praying for God's guidance (Psalms 119:105).

2. Guidance through parents. None of us chose our parents. God gave parents to us so that they might guide us. God works through them to reveal His will (Ephesians 6:1,2).
3. Guidance through other Christians. Sometimes it is wise to look for counsel from wise and mature Christians. Their experience could well save a young Christian from falling (Hebrews 13:7,17).
4. Guidance through circumstances. Since God controls the universe, He can plan the circumstances of our life to reveal His will. A letter, for example, could arrive just at the time we needed to see the path of God's will.
5. Guidance through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can sway our convictions, desires, and inclinations in such a manner that we can follow God's will. In those cases, His guidance is so clear that to refuse is to disobey God (Acts 11:12; 16:6,7).

One last word. When God gives light, walk in it (Acts 26:19). This guidance should be obeyed for further leading to continue. Obedience is the basis for a life filled with happiness and long-lasting value.

## **PRAYER AND PRAISE**

What does the Bible teach about prayer?

There can be no progress in a Christian's life without prayer. It is important, therefore, that a Christian know what the Bible says about this subject.

1. Why should we pray? Because the Bible commands us to (I Timothy 2:8). The Lord Jesus was a man of prayer. If He felt the need for it, how much more should we! (I Thessalonians 5:17, 18; Ephesians 6:18).
2. How often should we pray? The Bible says to "Pray without ceasing." (I Thessalonians 5:17). This means that we should always be ready and able to pray. We should be able to approach God at any moment. At the same time, we should set aside a daily time to talk with Him. When we arise in the morning and when we end the day, we should talk to our Lord. Naturally, whether we are in public or private, we should thank him for our meals.
3. In what position should we pray? Daniel knelt to pray (Daniel 6:10). So did our Lord Jesus (Luke 22:41). Nehemiah, however, prayed standing before the king (Nehemiah 2:4). Generally, we kneel when in private. However, the Christian has the privilege to talk with God even as he walks down the street or about his daily activities.
4. What should we pray for? The Scriptures respond to this question in Philippians 4:6; I Timothy 2:1-3; and Matthew 9:38. There is nothing too small or too large that cannot be taken to the Lord in prayer. Many find it useful to keep a prayer list where they note such needs as:
  - a.) names of friends and relatives who are unbelievers.
  - b.) names of those who are sick or who have special needs.
  - c.) names of those who are serving God, such as missionaries, evangelists, pastors, teachers, etc.

When your petitions are specific, you will see specific answers. If you pray for things in general, you have no way of knowing when God answers your prayer.

5. Conditions for prayer to be answered:
  - a.) If we abide in Christ, our prayers will be answered (John 15:7). "Abide in Christ," means to obey His commandments (I John 3:22).
  - b.) Our prayers should be according to His will (I John 5:14). Since the greater part of God's will is revealed through the Bible, our petitions should not be contrary to what God reveals in Scripture.
  - c.) Our prayers should be in the name of Christ (John 14:13; 16:23). When we truly pray in His name, it is as if Christ Himself were talking to God the Father.

- d.) Our motives should be pure (James 4:3). If our purposes are self-centered or sinful, we cannot expect God to answer.
- 6. The language of our prayers. We should pray to God with reverence, using language that is proper and respectful.
- 7. Dangers in Prayer:
  - a.) Do not pray to be seen by others.
  - b.) Don't ask God to do something that you are able to do. No Christian in his right mind would step in front of a car and then ask God to miraculously stop the car. God has given us legs to get out of the way.
  - c.) Don't ask for something that you know you shouldn't have! God sometimes lets us have them, but also gives us leanness of soul (Psalms 106:15).
  - d.) Avoid vain repetitions (Matthew 6:7; Ecclesiastes 5:2).
- 8. Other suggestions:
  - a.) If you find that your mind wanders, try praying aloud. This will help your concentration.
  - b.) Don't get discouraged if you are not answered right away. God's responses are never too early so that we miss the blessing of waiting on Him, neither are they too late that we trust Him in vain.
  - c.) If God's answer is not what you asked for, remember this: God reserves the right to give us something better than what we asked for. We don't know what is best for us, but He does. He gives us more than we could ask or think (II Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 3:20).

## ***WITNESSING AND WINNING SOULS***

How can a Christian lead others to Christ?

Winning souls is one of the greatest jobs in the world today (Proverbs 11:30). Although there are no hard and fixed rules to assure success in this job, there are a few general principles that will give invaluable results.

1. It is very important that the soul-winner be spiritually sound. He should be constantly feeding on the Word of God. He should spend much time in prayer. He should submit to God. He should confess and set aside any known sin. Walking in the Spirit, the Christian will find that the Lord will provide opportunities to give an effective testimony. This is the Golden Rule for winning souls: "Live close to God." (Matthew 4:19).
2. It is a good thing to start every day asking God to bring to us, those He would have hear the Gospel. It is obvious that we cannot witness to everyone we see. It is also clear that we have no way of knowing the ones who are "ripe" for salvation; but, if we allow the Lord to guide us, we will work more effectively and reap more fruit for Him.
3. We should take advantage of any opportunities to talk of Christ. When those at work use God's name profanely, it becomes an excellent opportunity to give a witness for Christ. Religious subjects come up often in conversation and we should take maximum advantage of them. Also, we should not always wait for the opportunities to come to us. Everyone feels free to converse about politics, sports, weather, etc. Why shouldn't we feel free to talk about spiritual things?
4. Quote God's Word as much as much is possible. It is a Living Word (Hebrews 4:12)! It has more power to reach souls than our own words. It is the Sword of the Spirit and every soldier of Christ should know how to use this most powerful of weapons. Many times, unbelievers will do all they can to prevent your using the Scriptures, but don't stop. If they say they don't believe the Bible, quote it even more.
5. Follow up every contact you make. It isn't often that a person is saved the first time he hears the Gospel. Generally, you have to talk to them time and again. Show them kindness. Give them good literature. Invite them to attend church services with you.

Above all, pray much for them. Don't get discouraged if some are hostile toward you. This opposition is sometimes a sign that they are being convicted by the Holy Spirit. Indifference is worse than hostility.

6. Don't try to get quick decisions. A false profession is not only worthless, but also deceives the individual into thinking that he is right with God. It could harm the cause of Christ. Be faithful in planting the good seed. God will be responsible for the growth.
7. If you find it hard to talk to others about Christ, tell it to the Lord and ask Him to give you strength and boldness to testify for Him. If you really want it, He'll give it to you.
8. Always keep a good supply of literature with you. You not only can give a good tract to those you talk to, but also you can leave it behind in public places that you visit.

The rewards of winning souls are tremendous:

1. The joy of winning a soul to Christ is indescribable (Luke 15:10)!
2. What greater joy could there be in heaven than when someone greets you saying, "You were the one who invited me here."
3. Finally, what incomparable emotion will be felt when our Lord Jesus Christ tells the heavenly host of our soulwinning (Matthew 10:32)!

In light of this, our prayer should constantly be, "Let me look on the multitudes as my Saviour did, until my eyes fill with tears. Let me look upon the wayward sheep with mercy, and love them because of my love for Him." (Matthew 9:36).

***AND NOW...***

***WHAT FOLLOWS?***

We congratulate you for having finished this course on the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. Upon receiving your exams, we will correct them and send you the next course in this series. There are many more courses that we offer that will be of spiritual benefit to you.

