

Study 1. A Christian has New Life

READ: John 1: 12-13 and John 3: 1-8



KEY VERSE: John 3: 5

“Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”

Before we begin looking at the Christian Life, let us remind ourselves how it begins. It begins when we receive new life from God. This new life is:

- i. **Spiritual.** ‘New life’ does not mean that we are given new bodies. It means being given a new nature. It means to be born again by the Spirit of God. (**John 3: 6**)
- ii. **From God.** It is God who gives us this spiritual ‘new life’. To be born again is to be born “**from above**”, that is, from God. We do not inherit it from our parents; we do not earn it by our good living and we cannot buy it with money. It is God’s gift. (**Read John 1: 12 & 13**)
- iii. **Everlasting.** This means it will never come to an end, and it will never be taken away from us. (**John 10: 28**)

Here are a few phrases that are often used to describe a Christian-someone who has this new life from God.

A CHRISTIAN IS A CHILD OF GOD.

Read 1 John 3: 1 & 2. We are not children of God by our natural birth. God is the Creator of all men and women, but that is not the same as being the Father of all. In **John 8: 42-44** the Lord Jesus says that God is the Father of some people, but that other people do not have God as their Father. There are two ‘families’ of people in the world - there is the ‘family’ of Adam (and the devil), and the ‘family’ of God. Every baby born into this world is born into the family of ‘Adam’. As the first man he is the head of the devil’s family. You remember how he rebelled against God, and took sides with God’s greatest enemy - Satan (or the devil). As members of this vast family, we all have human bodies, but we also have sinful, fallen natures. Every baby born into this world joins this vast ‘family’; the baby has a human body, but also a sinful nature. The ONLY

exception to this is Jesus, who was born of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. (**Luke 1: 35**) We all get this sinful nature from Adam, who is the father of us all. When we become Christians we are taken out of Adam’s family and placed into God’s family and given the right to be called children of God, as **John 1: 12** teaches us.

A CHRISTIAN IS A SAVED SINNER.

“... **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . .**” (**1 Timothy 1: 15**)

Christians are people who have been saved by God, from the punishment that their sins deserved. The punishment of sin is to live forever away from God. This ‘everlasting separation’ from God is called in the Bible, hell.

Sin is disobedience to God. We disobey God, when we do the things He tells us NOT to do (like stealing, lying and murder etc...). We also disobey God when we fail to do the things which He wants us to do (like being respectful and obedient to our parents, or putting God first in everything). Although God is a God of love, He is also a God of holiness and He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. He is angry about our sin and will one day judge it. Because He loves us, He warns us about “**the wrath to come**” and is willing to save us from His judgment if we trust in the Lord Jesus and in His death for us upon the cross.

A CHRISTIAN IS A FORGIVEN SINNER.

Read 1 John 2: 12. When we are born again, God forgives all our sins because “**Christ died for our sins**”. (**1 Corinthians 15: 3**) This means that when Jesus died on the cross, He bore our sins and suffered the punishment that was deserved by us. This makes it possible for God to forgive all our sins and to wipe them away. King David wrote of the wonderful joy of knowing that his sins had been forgiven. “**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.**” **Psalms 32: 1**

Thank God, if you know these things are true of you! If they are not, ask God today to make you one of His children, to save you from His punishment of sin, and forgive you all that you have done against Him. Remember the Lord Jesus said, “**He who believes in Me has everlasting life**”. (**John 6: 47**)

Study 1. A Christian has New Life

1 EXPLAIN AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "BORN AGAIN".

3

2 'WHEN YOU HAVE RECEIVED ETERNAL LIFE, IT CAN NEVER BE TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU.'
WRITE OUT A VERSE FROM JOHN 10 WHICH WOULD SUPPORT THIS STATEMENT.

2

3 GIVE A REASON WHY:-

I. IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT WE ARE ALL IN GOD'S FAMILY.

II. JESUS WAS DIFFERENT COMPARED TO US WHEN HE WAS HERE ON EARTH.

III. WE ALL HAVE A SINFUL NATURE.

6

4 A. GIVE FOUR EXAMPLES OF HOW WE MAY SIN AGAINST GOD BY DOING WHAT HE HAS TOLD US NOT TO DO. (NEED HELP? READ EXODUS 20!) _____

B. GIVE TWO EXAMPLES OF HOW WE MAY FAIL TO DO WHAT GOD HAS TOLD US TO DO.
(NEED HELP? READ EPHESIANS 6!) _____

6

5 'A CHRISTIAN IS A SAVED SINNER.'

I. FROM WHAT HAS HE/SHE BEEN SAVED? _____

II. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE GREATEST PROOF THAT GOD WANTS TO SAVE US?

4

6 WRITE A SENTENCE DESCRIBING THE KIND OF MAN NICODEMUS WAS. BASE YOUR ANSWER ON THE VERSES YOU HAVE READ IN JOHN 3.

2

7 THE FIRST WORD OF PSALM 32, "BLESSED" COULD BE TRANSLATED "OH THE HAPPINESSES". WHY SHOULD A FORGIVEN PERSON BE HAPPY?

2

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KEY VERSE: 1 Peter 2: 2

“. . . as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”

In the first Study we looked at some phrases which told us about Christians. Here are some more descriptions of what a Christian is:

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO GOD.

Read Acts 3: 19. When people are converted it means that they change or turn about, or turn from one thing or opinion to another. They have turned their backs on the sinful things that they used to do and are now living lives that please God. In **Acts 26: 18** becoming a Christian is said to be like turning from “**darkness to light**”. In **Acts 14: 15** it includes turning from pagan sacrifices to the one true God. For some people, the change in their lives when they are converted is a major thing, for others it is not. The Christians in the city of Thessalonica are a good example of what conversion is. We read of them that they “**turned to God from idols**”. (**1 Thessalonians 1: 9-10**) They were converted to God!

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD.

Read Colossians 1: 21. Before we become Christians, we are God’s enemies. All men and women are born as enemies to God. It is the sinful nature we inherited from Adam that makes us God’s enemies. The sinful nature hates God, hates the Bible, and longs to do the things that are against God. That doesn’t necessarily mean we hated Him with all our hearts, but it does mean that we didn’t love Him, keep His Word and try to please Him. But when we become Christians, God takes away our enmity and gives us “**peace with God**”. (**Romans 5: 1**) It is through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are reconciled to God, “**who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ . . .**”. (**2 Cor. 5: 18**)

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO IS “IN CHRIST”.

Before we become Christians we are “**without Christ**”. (**Ephesians 2: 12**) This means that we

were in the family of Adam, our first ancestor, who sinned. We were, like him, sinners. But when we are “**born again**”, we are brought into the family of Christ, who is the Head of our new family. And “**in Christ**” we receive all the blessings that God gives. Paul says, “**God . . . has blessed us with every spiritual blessing . . . in Christ**”. (**Ephesians 1: 3**)

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN HIM.

Read 1 Corinthians 6: 19. Before we become Christians, our lives are controlled by our sinful natures. But when we become Christians, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. (**1 John 3: 24**) Having the Holy Spirit means we have a new nature which begins to show itself in a dislike of sin, a love for God and His Word. The Holy Spirit also helps us to overcome temptation. He is always with every true Christian, and He will never leave us. (**Read John 14: 16 & 17**)

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO IS ALIVE TO GOD.

Read Ephesians 2: 1. Before we become Christians we are ‘dead’ to God. That means we did not know Him, love Him, understand Him, or have any fellowship with Him. But when we become Christians, the Holy Spirit makes us alive to God.

So then, a Christian is a born-again sinner, having a new spiritual life. He is saved from God’s judgment on sin and has had all his sins forgiven. He has been converted to God from the old sinful ways, and has been reconciled to God and is no longer God’s enemy. He is “**in Christ**”, in a new family, has the Holy Spirit living within him and is alive to God. We should thank God that all these things happen to us the moment we become Christians, even though we don’t know it at the time. If you have truly repented of your sins, and trusted in the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour, then all these things are true of you! You are “**a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new**”. (**2 Corinthians 5: 17**)

Study 2. Before and After

1 A. WHAT WORD IS OFTEN USED TO DENOTE 'A TURNING TO GOD'? _____

B. READ *1 THESSALONIANS 1: 9 & 10*, NOTING THAT WHEN THESE CHRISTIANS FIRST "TURNED TO GOD" THEY 'WORKED' AND THEY 'WAITED'. EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS THE CHANGE THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE LIVES OF THESE PEOPLE.

C. READ *ACTS 19: 17-19*. WHAT DID THE MAGICIANS IN EPHESUS DO TO SHOW THEY WERE CONVERTED TO GOD? _____

6

2 A. EXPLAIN BRIEFLY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE "RECONCILED TO GOD". _____

B. WHY DO WE NEED TO BE RECONCILED TO GOD? _____

C. WHAT MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE RECONCILED? _____

6

3 ANSWER TRUE OR FALSE:-

The Holy Spirit lives within every true Christian. _____

The Holy Spirit will leave us if we do not live as good Christians. _____

The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in us at our baptism. _____

1 Corinthians 6: 19 teaches us that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. _____

The Holy Spirit is the One whom Jesus promised to send to His disciples. _____

(John 14: 16 & 17)

5

4 LOOK AGAIN AT THE VERSES IN THE BIBLE READING, AND THEN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS:-

In what way were we once "dead"? _____

In what way is God "rich"? _____

What will not save us? _____

What is the purpose of our salvation? _____

4

5 A. WRITE OUT THE KEY VERSE. _____

B. EXPLAIN, AS CLEARLY AS YOU CAN, WHAT IT MEANS. _____

4

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KEY VERSE: 2 Corinthians 5: 17
“If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

So you have become a Christian. How do you know that? How can you be sure?

The Bible tells us that Christians are new creatures. **“Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (KEY VERSE)** We are told to walk in **“newness of life”**. (See **Romans 6: 4**) What does that mean?

In the **Bible Reading** we read about a man called Zacchaeus. He was a tax collector who lived at the same time as Jesus. As a tax collector, it was his job to collect people’s taxes and give them to the Romans. Like the majority of tax collectors in his day, he was probably a cheat who treated people very unfairly. But Jesus came to see him one day, and having spoken to Zacchaeus, He said, **“Today salvation has come to this house”**. (Luke 19: 9) How could He tell? The Lord Jesus knew the change that had taken place in Zacchaeus. He can see into our hearts in a way no one else can! But, in addition, there were visible signs of change:-

ZACCHAEUS HAD A CHANGE OF HEART.

Whereas before he had been selfish, money grabbing and mean, he now became generous and thoughtful. He promised to give away half of his goods to the poor. It was the same with Saul, later known as Paul. When he became a Christian, he stopped persecuting Christians and began to care for them.

ZACCHAEUS WANTED TO PUT RIGHT WHAT HE HAD DONE WRONG.

Where he had cheated people before, he now wanted to repay them, and to give them four times the amount (much more than Jewish law demanded). Everyone who becomes a Christian should really try to put things right, if it is at all possible.

ZACCHAEUS STOPPED CHEATING PEOPLE.

He put right what was wrong, which showed he intended to stop being dishonest. This is what

repentance means - to have a change of heart leading to a change of behaviour.

The Bible says to Christians, **“Let him who stole steal no longer”**. (Ephesians 4: 28) There were some nasty characters living in Corinth when Paul came and preached the Gospel to them. They were saved, and this meant that they had to change their way of life. In his letter to them, Paul mentions idol worshippers, thieves, drunkards, and those guilty of sexual immorality, then adds, **“Such were some of you. But you were washed . . .”** . (1 Corinthians 6: 11)

Some of the people in the church in Ephesus had practised magic before they became Christians. Once they were saved, they put an end to that publicly. **“Many of those who practised magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.”** (Acts 19: 19) This showed a complete change of mind and behaviour - a clear sign of true conversion!

Perhaps very few who become Christians these days are saved from such dreadful backgrounds. But many people do have sinful habits which are not right in God’s sight. If we did certain things before we became Christians, such as lying, cheating, stealing, and using bad language, we should see a change in our behaviour after we are saved. We should also experience extra power - God’s power - to help us overcome our sinful habits. **“Do not let sin reign in your mortal body . . . for sin shall not have dominion (power) over you.”** (Romans 6: 12-14) Whereas before it was a struggle to say ‘No’ to sin, Christians have the help of the Holy Spirit to resist temptation.

In addition to a great change in our life as far as the old ways and habits are concerned, we should also have a new love for God, for His Word (the Bible), and for other Christians. Remember the two parts to the **KEY VERSE** above: 1. - **“old things have passed away”** (sin and evil habits) 2. - **“all things have become new”** (a new love for God, new power, new habits).

Are you able to point to such a change in your life? That is a good sign that you are saved. Thank God for it.

NewLife
WorkSheet

Study 3. Changed Actions

1 A. IN WHAT PARTICULAR WAYS WERE MANY OF THE TAX COLLECTORS DISHONEST?

B. IN WHAT WAYS DID ZACCHAEUS' CHANGE OF HEART EXPRESS ITSELF, WHEN HE BECAME A FOLLOWER OF JESUS? _____

4

2 A. WHY SHOULD A THIEF NO LONGER STEAL AFTER HE BECOMES A CHRISTIAN? (EPHESIANS 4: 28)

B. WHAT EXTRA 'POWER' DOES A CHRISTIAN HAVE TO ENABLE HIM TO OVERCOME SINFUL HABITS?

6

3 PAUL WROTE, "BUT YOU WERE WASHED . . ." TO PEOPLE AT CORINTH WHO HAD LIVED VERY WICKED LIVES. (1 CORINTHIANS 6: 9-11) WHAT DID PAUL MEAN?

4

4 A. WRITE A SENTENCE TO EXPLAIN WHY PEOPLE IN EPHESUS BURNED THEIR BOOKS. (SEE ACTS 19: 17-19) _____

B. SUGGEST A PRESENT DAY COUNTERPART TO THE BURNING OF THEIR BOOKS.

4

5 EXPLAIN WHAT THE STUDY MEANS WHEN IT SPEAKS ABOUT 'THE TWO PARTS OF THE KEY VERSE'. _____

4

6 WHAT EVIDENCE OF 'NEW LIFE' MIGHT BE SEEN TODAY, IN A TEENAGER WHO HAS RECENTLY BEEN SAVED? _____

3

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Total marks for this study



KEY VERSE: 2 Timothy 3: 15

“... from childhood you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Suppose some young people, who have been brought up in Christian homes and who have never lived openly wicked lives, become believers in the Lord Jesus. What evidence will there be that they have been truly saved? They have never used bad language, been expelled from school, been violent or addicted to alcohol or other drugs! We cannot expect to see a dramatic change in their behaviour now that they are saved! This absence of a complete ‘about turn’ in conduct sometimes causes young people to wonder if they are truly saved. Lydia about whom we have read in the **Bible Reading**, possibly was like this - she had never been ‘a bad character’, and indeed, she was saved while attending a prayer meeting!

There are, however, other tests we can apply to ourselves to see whether we are Christians or not. When we become Christians, God gives us a new life, with new desires, regardless of whether we were really sinful or not. We say ‘really sinful’ carefully, for in God’s eyes there is no real difference! The fact is that we are all sinners as **Romans 3: 23** tells us. This second set of tests, which we should apply to ourselves, are tests to help us see what we are now, not just tests which look for a major change in our lives.

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO LOVE GOD.

Read 1 John 4: 19. Before we became Christians we didn’t love God. Perhaps we were a little afraid of Him, and we didn’t know Him. But when we trust the Lord Jesus, God helps us to love Him and to want to do the things that please Him. This love for God helps us to be careful that we don’t grieve Him by doing the things that He does not like. In other words, we begin to live for God, not for ourselves. **(See 2 Corinthians 5: 15)**

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO LOVE OTHER CHRISTIANS.

Perhaps, before we became Christians, we thought

Christians were a little weird. But when God changes our lives, He changes our friends too. We begin to like other Christians, and we begin to enjoy their company. Loving other Christians is one of the signs that we are born again. **1 John 3: 14** states that **“we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren”**.

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO LOVE THE BIBLE.

We begin to enjoy reading it. We might not understand all that it says, because it is still a hard book to understand. But we begin to appreciate it more; we begin to understand what it has to say, and we want to read it and study it. In the same way as a newborn baby wants to feed as soon as it is born, and needs milk to grow, so a new Christian longs for the **“milk of the word”** which is the Bible. **(Read 1 Peter 2: 1-3)**

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO WANT OTHERS TO BECOME CHRISTIANS TOO.

We start to invite our friends and family to hear the Gospel and to pray for them to be saved. We try to follow the example of Paul who said, **“My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved”**. **(Romans 10: 1)**

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO IS SEEKING TO BE HOLY TO PLEASE GOD.

Read 1 John 3: 2 & 3. A non-Christian, someone who is not born again, is not interested in pleasing God. He is someone who lives for himself. But when we are saved, God puts into our hearts a love for God and for pleasing God. As we read the Bible, we find out the things which do not please God. We then try not to do these things, and God helps us to avoid them through His Holy Spirit. We will also find out the things which do please Him, and we will try to do them. Now, this does not for a moment mean we will never sin again, once we have become Christians. But it does mean that we will be gradually becoming more like the Lord Jesus as each day goes by.

These are some of the signs of the ‘new birth’. You will notice that they are all POSITIVE things. Sometimes we are inclined to think of the Christian life in NEGATIVE terms - what we do not do, or say. It is much better to look for positive signs of spiritual life! Be challenged today! Put yourself to the test!

Study 4. Changed Attitudes

1 A. WRITE OUT ROMANS 3: 23. _____

B. EXPLAIN IN YOUR OWN WORDS WHAT THIS VERSE MEANS.

2

2 LOOK UP 1 JOHN 4: 19 AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:-

A. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE GREATEST PROOF THAT "HE FIRST LOVED US"? _____

2

B. HOW CAN A CHRISTIAN SHOW THAT HE LOVES GOD? _____

3 WRITE OUT JOHN 13: 34 TO DISCOVER THAT THE LORD JESUS COMMANDS CHRISTIANS TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. _____

3

4 SUGGEST SOME PRACTICAL WAYS IN WHICH NEW CHRISTIANS COULD SHOW TRUE 'CHRISTIAN LOVE' TO OTHER CHRISTIANS. _____

2

5 FILL IN THE MISSING VERSE NUMBERS:

"We love Him because He first loved us."

"We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren."

"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word."

I JOHN 3: ___ I PETER 2: ___ I JOHN 4: ___

3

6 READ 1 PETER 2: 1-3, THEN ANSWER:-

What should the attitude of the Christian be towards the Bible? _____

Suggest TWO excuses some Christians may give for not reading their Bible. _____

If we neglect reading our Bibles, what effect will it have on our spiritual growth? _____

6

7 READ 2 TIMOTHY 3: 15 & 16 AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:-

i. Who inspired the Holy Scriptures? _____

ii. How much of the Bible is merely human speculation? _____

iii. In what way can the Scriptures make a person 'wise'? _____

iv. Write 4 things the Scriptures are profitable for.

7

Return your study sheets to:

or the PBS Centre below

25

Total marks
for this study