

A6 - The Christian Life

A New Life

Study 1 - A Christian has New Life

BIBLE READING:

John 1: 12, 13; John 3: 1–8

KEY VERSE:

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

John 3: 5

The Christian life begins when we receive new life from God. This new life is:

- **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**)
- **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. (**John 1: 12, 13**)
- **Everlasting** - This means it will never come to an end and it will never be taken away from us. (**John 10: 28**)



Here are three descriptions of a Christian:

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 others do not have God as their Father. There are two ‘families’ of people in the world; the ‘family’ of Adam (and the devil), and the ‘family’ of God. Every baby is born into the family of ‘Adam’, who is the father of all. 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) (**Genesis 3**). As members of this vast family, we all have human bodies, but we also have sinful fallen natures. The exception is Jesus, who was born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit and had no sinful nature. (**Luke 1: 35**) When we become Christians we are taken out of Adam’s family and born 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 hell.

Sin is disobedience to God. We disobey God when we do the things He tells us NOT to, like stealing, lying and murder. We also disobey God when we fail to put Him first in everything and do not do the things that He wants us to do, like being respectful and obedient to our parents. Although God is a God of love, He is also a holy God and He cannot allow sin to be unpunished. He is angry about our sin and will judge it, one day. Because He loves us, He 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 the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”** **Psalms 32: 1**

You will want to 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, **“Whoever believes has eternal life”**. (**John 6: 47**)

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Study 2 - Before and After

BIBLE READING:

Ephesians 2: 1-10

KEY VERSES:

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...”

Ephesians 2: 4, 5

In this study we are going to explore some of the differences in a person's life before and after becoming a Christian.

A CHRISTIAN HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO GOD.

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. The Christians in the city of Thessalonica are another good example of what conversion is. We read that they “**turned to God from idols.**” (**1 Thessalonians 1: 9, 10**)

In people's experience today, the contrast between the old and new may not be so distinct, (depending on the person's age or lifestyle prior to being converted), but there is nevertheless a deliberate turning to God and a change of direction and destination.

A CHRISTIAN HAS BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD.

Colossians 1: 21, 22 - 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, because 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 through Christ reconciled us to Himself...**”. (**2 Corinthians 5: 18; Romans 5: 10**)

A CHRISTIAN IS “IN CHRIST”.

Before we become Christians we are “**without God**”. (**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 in Christ with every spiritual blessing...**”. (**Ephesians 1: 3**)

A CHRISTIAN HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT LIVING WITHIN.

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. (**John 14: 16, 17**)

A CHRISTIAN IS ALIVE TO GOD.

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.



To summarise, Christians are born-again sinners, with new spiritual lives. We are saved from God's judgment on sin, having had all our sins forgiven, converted to God from the old sinful ways, reconciled to God and no longer God's enemies. We are “**in Christ**”, in a new family, with the Holy Spirit living within and being 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. According to **2 Corinthians 5: 17**, you are “**a new creation**” and “**the old has passed away....**”. There can be no greater change than that!

Answer Sheet

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Name: _____ Return address on back of answer sheet

Address: _____

1. Connect these Scripture phrases to the headings used in the study relating to three aspects of new life. Draw a line between each pair.

“who were born of God”

Everlasting

“that which is born of the Spirit is spirit”

From God

“I give them eternal life....”

Spiritual

/3

2. Explain as clearly as you can what it means to be “born again”.

/4

3. Write the words from *John 10: 28* which tell us how Christians are kept secure.

/1

4. Give a reason why:

a) We cannot all be said to be in God’s family. _____

b) Jesus was different to us when He was here on earth. _____

c) We all have a sinful nature. _____

/3

5. Give four examples of how we may sin against God by doing what he has told us not to do. (Read *Exodus 20*) Give two examples of how we may fail to do what God has told us to do. (Read *Colossians 3: 12-14, 18-20*)

/6

6. ‘A Christian is a saved sinner.’

a) What has a Christian been saved from? _____

b) What do you think is the greatest proof that God wants to save us? _____

/2

7. Write a sentence describing the kind of man Nicodemus was. Base your answer on the verses you have read in *John 3*.

/3

8. The first word of *Psalms 32*, “blessed” could be translated “oh the happinesses”. Why should a forgiven person be happy?

/3

THINK: How you would explain the benefits of being a Christian to someone who doesn’t know the good news of the Gospel.

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

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Study 2 - Before and After

1. Answer the following questions:

a) What word is often used to denote 'a turning to God'?

b) Read **1 Thessalonians 1: 9, 10**. Explain in your own words what they had done and what they continued to do now that they had become Christians.

 /3

2. Answer the following questions:

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:

a) The Holy Spirit lives within every Christian. _____

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

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

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

e) 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:

a) In what way were we once "**dead**"? _____

b) In what way is God "**rich**"? _____

c) By what can we not be saved? _____

d) What have those who have been saved been created for? _____

 /4

5. How does **2 Corinthians 5: 17** describe someone who has become a Christian?

 /2

6. Using the information in the study and the Bible references below, fill in the missing words to summarise the differences before and after a person is saved.

Reference

Acts 26: 18

Romans 5: 10

Ephesians 2: 12, 13

1 Corinthians 6: 19

Ephesians 2: 1, 5

Before

darkness

_____ of God

without God

controlled by our sinful _____

_____ in sins

After

reconciled to God

_____ Christ

indwelt by the _____

alive together with Christ.

 /5

THINK: Reflect on the changes (summarised in question 6) that God brought about in your life at the moment you became a Christian. Give Him thanks for what He has done.

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

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Study 3 - Changed Actions

1. Answer the following questions:

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. Explain in your own words what 'repentance' means.

 /2

3. In what ways did Saul's life change when he became a Christian?

 /2

4. What do you think Paul meant when he wrote, "but you were washed..." to people at Corinth? (See 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11)

 /2

5. Answer the following questions:

a) Write a sentence to explain why people in Ephesus burned their books. (See Acts 19: 17-19)

b) Why do you think they burned them publicly?

 /4

6. Answer the following questions:

a) What 'power' do Christians have to enable them to overcome bad habits and sins?

b) Read Galatians 5: 22-23 and list the "fruit" that the Holy Spirit seeks to produce in our lives.

 /4

7. Explain in your own words what these two parts of the Key Verse mean:

a) "the old has passed away" _____

b) "the new has come" _____

 /4

8. What evidence of 'new life' might be seen today in the life of someone who has recently been saved?

 /3

THINK: In what ways has my life changed since I became a Christian? What are some of the sinful habits and actions that I still need to get rid of in my life?

TOTAL = /25

Answer Sheet

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Study 4 - Changed Attitudes

1. Read Acts 16: 11-15 again and write TRUE or FALSE beside the following statements:

- a) Paul and his friends were visiting Philippi. _____
- b) They joined a prayer meeting at the marketplace. _____
- c) Lydia was from the city of Thyatira. _____
- d) She was a seller of purple goods. _____
- e) Lydia did not believe in God. _____

 /5

2. How did Lydia respond to the message which Paul preached?

 /2

3. Look up 1 John 4: 19 and answer the following questions:

- a) Why do we love God? _____
- _____
- b) What do you think is the greatest proof that "**He first loved us**"? _____
- _____

 /2

4. Read John 13: 34, 35 and answer the following questions:

- a) What is the new command that Jesus has given us? _____
- _____
- b) How are we to love one another? _____
- _____
- c) What is the result of us loving one another? _____
- _____

 /6

5. Read 1 Peter 2: 1-3, then answer these questions:

- a) How is the Bible described? _____
- _____
- b) What should the attitude of the Christian be towards the Bible? _____
- _____
- c) If we neglect reading our Bibles, what effect will it have on our spiritual growth? _____
- _____

 /6

6. Read Colossians 3: 12-15 and list four qualities which Christians should display in their lives.

 /4

THINK: Can you think of some practical ways in which you could show true 'Christian love' to other Christians?

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Study 3 - Changed Actions

BIBLE READING:
Luke 19: 1-10

KEY VERSE:

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

2 Corinthians 5: 17

The Bible tells us that Christians are new creations. **“The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (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. It was his job to collect people’s taxes and give them to the Romans. Like the majority of tax-collectors at that time, 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: whereas before Zacchaeus 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. This is what repentance means - to have a change of heart leading to a change of behaviour.

Zacchaeus wanted to put right what was wrong, which showed he intended to stop being dishonest. 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.

The New Testament contains many examples of people whose lives were dramatically changed when they became Christians. When Saul (later known as Paul) became a Christian he stopped persecuting Christians and began to care for them. He then went on to preach the Gospel to others. One of the places that he visited was Corinth, a very immoral city. Those who were saved had to change their way of life. In his letter to them, Paul gives a list of those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God, including idol worshippers, thieves, and those guilty of sexual immorality. He then adds, **“Such were some of you. But you were washed...” (1 Corinthians 6: 11)**

Similarly, some of the people in the church in Ephesus had practised sorcery before they became Christians. Once they were saved, though, they put an end to that publicly. **“A number of those who had practiced magic arts 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!

We may not come from the kind of backgrounds of those who have been mentioned in this study, but we all 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 also have God’s power to help us overcome the bad habits and sins. 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. “the old has passed away” (sin and evil habits)
2. “the new has come” (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.



This is the first of five units on
The Christian Life.

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Study 4 - Changed Attitudes

BIBLE READING:

Acts 16: 11-15

KEY VERSE:

“Let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.”

1 John 4: 7

In the previous study we looked at some people whose lives were profoundly changed when they became Christians. For others, however, the change in their lifestyle may not be so dramatic; for example they have never used bad language, been expelled from school, been violent or addicted to alcohol or other drugs! In such circumstances we cannot expect to see a dramatic change in behaviour when they are saved! Lydia about whom we have read in the Bible Reading, possibly was like this; indeed, she was saved while attending a prayer meeting!

When we become Christians, God gives us all new life, and new desires, regardless of whether we were really sinful or not. We say ‘really sinful’, carefully, for in God’s eyes there is no difference! The fact is that we are all sinners as **Romans 3: 23** tells us. Here are some signs of new life and new desires that we should see in our lives.

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO LOVE GOD.

(1 John 4: 19)

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.

(1 John 3: 14)

When we are born again we become part of God’s family. Sometimes it can be tough getting on with our Christian brothers and sisters, but the Holy Spirit helps us to love each other. 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 out of death into life, because we love the brothers.”** See also the Key Verse **1 John 4: 7**

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO LOVE THE BIBLE.

(1 Peter 2: 2)

We begin to enjoy reading it. We might not grasp 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 **“spiritual milk”** which is the Bible. (1 Peter 2: 2)

A CHRISTIAN BEGINS TO WANT OTHERS TO BECOME CHRISTIANS TOO.

(Romans 10: 1)

We start to speak to our friends and family about the Lord Jesus 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 them is that they may be saved.”** (Romans 10: 1)

A CHRISTIAN IS SOMEONE WHO IS TRYING TO BE HOLY, TO PLEASE GOD.

(1 John 3: 2-3)

The love that we now have for God gives us a desire to please Him. By reading the Bible we discover how we can please God and the Holy Spirit helps us to put these things into practice in our lives. (**Colossians 3: 12 – 15**) We also learn about the things which do not please God and with His power we can avoid them. This does not 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, but it is much better to look for positive signs of spiritual life!



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