

A7 - The Christian Life

An Obedient Life

Study 1 - Jesus is Lord

BIBLE READING: John 13: 12-17

KEY VERSE: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

John 14: 15

If we are Christians, Jesus is not only our Saviour but He should also be our Lord. This means that we are to obey Him, by putting into practice what the Bible says and honouring Him above everything else.

The name "Christian" is mentioned in **Acts 11: 25-26**. It was used by onlookers to describe those who identified with Christ and followed His teaching. As a Christian, you bear Christ's name and are connected with Him. As Christians, we are also:

1. BELIEVERS

This is perhaps obvious because we became Christians by believing on the Lord Jesus. (**Acts 16: 31**) But this first step of faith is to be followed by many others! Believing the Word of God and putting it into practice was so important for the first Christians that they became known as 'believers'. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy and encouraged him to **"set the believers an example.."** (1 Timothy 4: 12)

2. FOLLOWERS

This means 'imitators', or 'copiers.' In other words, believers are to imitate (or copy) God, in order to become more like Him. Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, **"Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children."** (Ephesians 5: 1) Believers are also to copy other believers as seen in Paul's reminder to the Christians in Thessalonica, **"You became imitators of us and of the Lord..."** (1 Thessalonians 1: 6)

3. DISCIPLES

The word 'disciple' means 'a learner'. In New Testament times a teacher had a band of followers who learned the things he taught and did, and then put them into practice. The disciple would then have taught others to be disciples.

Jesus had many disciples, and from them He chose twelve to be His special companions. These twelve spent all their time with Jesus. They were chosen for two purposes:

1. **"that they might be with Him"** and
2. **"that He might send them out to preach."** (Mark 3: 14)

The 'being with' was the learning part and the 'sending' was the practising part. They were to preach His message. Later, just before the Lord Jesus went back into Heaven, He commanded His disciples to **"Go... and make disciples of all nations, baptising them... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"**. (Matthew 28: 19-20)

As a disciple of Jesus, you will spend time with Him learning from His Word, putting it into practice, becoming more like Him and then making disciples by sharing the good news with others.



4. SERVANTS

As servants, we are to obey our Master. Before we become believers, we are the servants of sin and Satan. But the Lord Jesus makes us free, not to do our own thing and live whichever way we want to. We are freed in order to become the servants of the Lord Jesus. **"You are not your own. For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."** (1 Corinthians 6: 19-20)

Jesus asked people, **"Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord', and not do what I tell you?"** (Luke 6: 46) He once called Himself the **"Lord and Teacher"** of believers. (**John 13: 14**) The Lord Jesus was the Perfect Servant of His Father in Heaven and did the things that pleased His Father. He Himself set us an example. We are to be His servants and servants of God. The servant is not greater than the master. He expected obedience when He said **"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments"**. (John 14: 15) As servants, we are answerable to the Lord for what we do and must serve God faithfully and selflessly. When we reach Heaven, we will hear Him say, **"Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master."** (Matthew 25: 23)

Paul summed up a true believer's relationship to God when, in speaking of Him, he said, **"to whom I belong and whom I worship"**. (Acts 27: 23) He recognised that, now that he was saved, he belonged to God, (body and soul), and he wanted to serve and obey Him. Paul was 'saved to serve.' So are you!

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Study 2 - Being Baptised

BIBLE READING: **Acts 2: 36-47**

KEY VERSE:
“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28: 19

In **Acts 2: 41** we read that over 3,000 people became Christians on the same day. A number of things happened at that time which are important to us because they show what the first Christians did.

1. THEY “RECEIVED HIS WORD.”

This means that they listened to the message Peter preached, agreed with it, and acted on it. They changed their minds about Jesus, believing now that He was **“Lord and Christ”**. They accepted the message, repented of their sin and were saved.

2. THEY WERE BAPTISED.

Baptism was an important step for these people. It continues to be an important act of obedience for believers all over the world. We must look carefully at what it means to be baptised.

WHO WERE BAPTISED?

It was **“those who received his word”**, people who had already become believers. (**Acts 2: 41**) The first step of obedience to the Gospel is repentance by confessing sin and turning to God for forgiveness. The second step is belief or trust in the Lord Jesus. In the Bible, believing in Him is very closely linked with being baptised. It is always stressed that believers are baptised, not unbelievers. It is also clear that a person becomes a believer before baptism, not after baptism or because of it. It is our faith in the work of Christ that makes us Christians, not our baptism. Baptism is the ‘fruit’ of faith in Christ, not the ‘root’ of it.

HOW WERE THEY BAPTISED?

The word ‘baptise’ in the Greek language in which the New Testament was originally written, means ‘to immerse’ or ‘to put something completely under’. If you want to change the colour of white cloth to blue, you put blue dye in water, mix the colour around, and then plunge the cloth down into the blue-coloured water. In the same way, then, as you would ‘baptise’ a piece of cloth by immersing it in water, so these early Christians were immersed in water after they became

believers. The same thing happened to the Ethiopian man in the desert. (**Acts 8: 36-38**) He listened to the message Philip preached to him, believed it and then asked to be baptised. When they came to water in the desert, both he and Philip **“went down into the water”** and he was baptised in it.



WHY WERE THEY BAPTISED?

They were baptised because the Lord Jesus had said to His disciples just before He left them and went back to Heaven, **“Go... make disciples... baptising them”**. (**Matthew 28: 19**) Now Peter was obeying Jesus in telling these new believers at Jerusalem that they needed to be baptised. Their baptism was an act of obedience. All Christians should be obedient in this way!

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL MEANING OF BAPTISM?

When an individual believer goes down into the water, under the water, and comes out of the water, he is showing symbolically what he has believed. Paul wrote, in **1 Corinthians 15: 3-4**, **“Christ died for our sins... He was buried... He was raised on the third day...”**. When a Christian is baptised, he is declaring his faith in the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus as the basis of his salvation.

3. THEY BEGAN TO LEARN.

Having been saved and baptised, they began to learn the teachings of Jesus. The ones who taught them were the apostles, the men who had been with Jesus, and had heard Him teach. The new Christians **“devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching.”** (**Acts 2: 42**) In other words, they took every opportunity to learn what the Christian faith is all about.

If you have believed the Gospel, Jesus is your Saviour and Lord. You can now show your obedience to Him by being baptised. Find a local Church where believer’s baptism is practised in the way that the New Testament teaches, and where the Bible is faithfully taught. Learn, obey, and later you will be able to teach others.

Answer Sheet

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Study 1 - Jesus is Lord

Name: _____ Return address on back of answer sheet

Address: _____

1. Answer the following questions:

- a) In which city were believers first called Christians? (**Acts 11: 25-26**) _____
- b) What does the word 'Christian' imply? _____

☐ /3

2. Why are Christians referred to in the Bible as "believers"?

☐ /2

3. Explain the meaning of the word 'follower' and suggest one way in which a Christian may fulfil this description.

☐ /3

4. Answer the following questions:

- a) Give two reasons why Jesus chose his twelve disciples? _____
- b) Name four of the twelve disciples. (**Mark 3: 16-19**) _____

☐ /4

5. Put the process of being a disciple in the correct order by ordering the sentences 1 to 4.

- He listens to his master's teaching and observes how he lives. _____
- The disciple is sent by his master to teach others. _____
- He becomes increasingly like his master. _____
- The disciple spends time with his master. _____

☐ /4

6. Read 1 Corinthians 6: 19-20.

- a) What did Paul mean when he wrote to the Christians at Corinth, "**You are not your own**"? _____
- b) How can Christians today "**glorify God**" in their bodies? _____

☐ /4

7. Read John 13: 12-17 again.

- a) What does Jesus call Himself in this passage? _____
- b) What example had He just given His disciples to follow? _____

☐ /2

8. Explain in your own words what it means to make Jesus, the Lord of your life.

☐ /3

THINK: For us as disciples, the challenge is to listen to, to look at, to learn from, and live like our Master! How effective a disciple are you?

TOTAL = ☐ /25

Answer Sheet

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Study 2 - Being Baptised

1. Answer the following questions:

- a) What does it mean to repent? _____
- b) Why was it necessary for the Jews, in Jerusalem, to repent? (**see Acts 2: 36-38**) _____
- c) Why is it necessary for us to repent? _____

1/6

2. Answer the following questions:

- a) What does the word 'baptism' mean? _____
- b) Describe briefly the baptism of the Ethiopian, as recorded in **Acts 8: 36-38**. _____

1/4

3. Write TRUE or FALSE after each statement:

- a) Baptism is an act of obedience. _____
- b) Baptism is the root of faith in Christ _____
- c) Baptism only happened in Bible times. _____

1/3

4. Believing in the Lord Jesus should always come before baptism.

Write out a verse from the Bible Reading which would support this statement.

1/2

5. Answer each of these questions in a few words:

- a) Who gave the command for baptism? _____
- b) Who should be baptised? _____
- c) How should they be baptised? _____
- d) Why should they be baptised? _____
- e) What is baptism a 'picture' of? _____

1/5

6. Baptism is a public expression of a person's personal faith. Explain this statement from what you have learned from this study.

1/2

7. The believers in Acts 2: 42 were "devoted to the apostles' teaching". What does this mean and how could you apply it in your life as a Christian?

1/3

THINK: How would you explain your reasons for wanting to be baptised to a Christian leader?

TOTAL = 1/25

Answer Sheet

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Study 3 - Fellowship

1. Explain briefly in your own words what it means to be part of the family of God.

1/2

2. Answer the following questions:

a) Explain what 'fellowship' meant to the first Christians?

b) In what practical ways did the first Christians show their love for each other? (**See Acts 2: 44-45; Acts 4: 34-35**)

c) What do you think are the benefits today of having Christian fellowship and Christian friends?

1/6

3. Answer the following questions:

a) What do people often mean when they use the word 'church' today?

b) What is the New Testament meaning of the word 'church'?

1/4

4. The "breaking of bread" was introduced by the Lord Jesus Himself. Read **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26**, and answer the following briefly:

a) When did He introduce it?

b) What did He say the bread would represent?

c) What did He say about the cup?

d) Why do Christians take the bread and the cup?

e) For how long are they to continue doing this?

1/5

5. Answer TRUE or FALSE:

a) It is God's will that Christians should meet together.

b) In the Bible, the word 'church' always means a building for religious services.

c) The 'breaking of bread' is sometimes called the 'Lord's Supper'.

d) Praying to God was a feature of first century church-life.

1/4

6. Read about the prayer meeting in **Acts 4: 23-31**.

a) What did the Christians pray for themselves? (**verse 29**)

b) What three things happened as a result of this prayer meeting? (**verse 31**)

1/4

THINK: Thank God for those Christians who have been an encouragement to you as a follower of the Lord Jesus. Think of one specific person that you could help and encourage.

TOTAL = 1/25

Answer Sheet

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Study 4 - Telling Others

1. The words quoted from *Mark 16: 15* are often called 'the Great Commission'. Explain briefly, in your own words what the Lord Jesus is telling His disciples to do.

/3

2. Read *Acts 1: 8* (Key Verse) and answer the following questions:

- a) Give the names of the places where the apostles were to be witnesses.
- b) For whom are we to be witnesses?
- c) Who gives us the power to witness?

/4

3. Read *John 4: 25-30* again.

- a) What convinced the woman, more than anything else, that Jesus was 'the Messiah' ('the Christ')?

- b) What effect did her words have on the men of the city?

/4

4. Read *Acts 8: 1-4* and write short answers to the following questions:

- a) Why did the Christians have to leave Jerusalem?
- b) Where did they go?
- c) In what ways were they being persecuted?
- d) How did these Christians witness when they were scattered?

/4

5. Answer the following questions:

- a) In what ways might Christians be persecuted for their faith today?

- b) When we are persecuted, we should remember the promise which the Lord Jesus gave His disciples.

(*Matthew 28: 19-20*) Write the promise here.

/4

6. Complete the diagram below from *Romans 10: 13-15*.

"Everyone who on the name of the Lord will be



But how are they to call on Him in whom they have not ?



And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never ?



And how are they to hear without someone ?



And how are they to preach unless they are ?"

/6

THINK: If you had the opportunity to tell a friend about the Lord Jesus, what are the key things that you would want to say?

Return your completed answer sheet to:

TOTAL = /25

UNIT TOTAL = /100

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Study 3 - Fellowship

BIBLE READING:

Acts 2: 41-47; Acts 20: 6-12

KEY VERSES:

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together...”

Hebrews 10: 24-25

THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO FELLOWSHIP.

When we become Christians we become part of God's family. God is our Heavenly Father, we are his children and other Christians are our brothers and sisters. (**John 1: 12**) As young believers it is important that we have the support, care and friendship of our brothers and sisters in God's family.



In **Acts 2: 42** we read that the first Christians “**devoted themselves to...fellowship**”. This means more than that they spent a lot of time with each other. Now that they were believers they found they had a lot in common. They loved God, they loved each other and they loved to spend time with each other. These new Christians shared their food, their homes, their money and their knowledge of God.

Nowadays, if a building is used for Christian purposes it is often called a ‘church’. For example, if we want to direct someone somewhere we would perhaps say, “Go down

the road and turn left at the church”. But the word ‘church’ in the Greek language in which the book of the Acts was written simply meant ‘called out’. So the church is a group or community of people who have been called out of this world by the Lord Jesus (**1 Peter 2: 9**), adopted into the family of God and who are now seeking to follow Him.

THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES TO THE BREAKING OF BREAD AND PRAYERS.

Acts 2: 42 goes on to tell us that the believers met together to “**break bread**” and to pray. The “**breaking of bread**” is also known as “**The Lord's Supper**”. (See **1 Corinthians 11: 20**) It was the time when believers met together and broke the bread and drank the cup in memory of the Lord Jesus. They did this because He had said to His disciples before He died, “**Do this in remembrance of Me**”. (See **Luke 22: 19** and **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26**)



They also met together for prayer. Praying is talking to God. God talks to us when we read the Bible. We talk to Him when we pray. It is good to pray on your own, and to tell God what is in your heart in a personal way. But it is also good to get together with other Christians to pray. Some of the first prayer meetings are recorded in **Acts 4: 23-31** and **Acts 12: 12-16**.

From the example of these first century believers, we see that God wants us to be baptised, to meet in fellowship with other Christians, to break bread together, to listen to God's word and to join with each other in prayer. If we do this, we will grow and we will help others to grow, and we will please God. In **Acts 20: 7** we see Christians, many years later, still following the example of these first Christians in **Acts 2**. Paul came to visit them, and found that they had come together on Sunday, “**to break bread**”, and to listen to the teaching of the Word of God.

The fact that Christians still meet together as church today shows the reality of the Christian message and the power of the Holy Spirit. As a believer and a child in God's family, you will want to meet with other believers as part of a church family. Spending time together, encouraging one another, praying, sharing and remembering the Lord Jesus are great privileges and will be significant in your growth as a Christian.

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Study 4 - Telling Others

BIBLE READING:
John 4: 5-30

KEY VERSE:

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1: 8

As we have seen in previous studies, Christians are disciples, or followers, of the Lord Jesus. From the example of the early Christians in **Acts 2** we have seen that we are to be baptised, in obedience to the Lord's command, that we are to join a local church of Christians, participate in their 'breaking of bread', listen to the teaching of the Bible and join in prayer. But before returning to Heaven, the Lord Jesus gave us another command! He said, **“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation”**. (**Mark 16: 15**) God wants every Christian to communicate the message of the Gospel to others.

The three examples below show us that one of the results of new birth and of becoming a disciple is a deep desire to tell others about the Lord Jesus.

1. A CONVINCED WOMAN

In **John chapter 4** the Lord Jesus met a woman from a city of Samaria, called Sychar. He spoke to her, and she believed what He had to say. She was so impressed by Him, that she went into the city and told other people about

Jesus, saying, **“Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did”**. In fact, she didn't just tell them about Jesus, she invited them to come and hear Him. (**verse 29**) As a result of her testimony and her invitation to people to come, **“they went out of the town and were coming to Him”**. (**verse 30**) Later we read **“Many Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman's testimony”**. (**verse 39**)

2. A HEALED MAN

In **Mark chapter 5** we read of a demon-possessed man who was healed by the Lord Jesus. He wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus said to him, **“Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you”**. As a result of what he had to say, **“everyone marvelled”**. (**Mark 5: 18-20**)

3. PERSECUTED PEOPLE

Acts 8 records how the Christians in Jerusalem were persecuted for their faith and many of them left Jerusalem and went to Judea and Samaria. (See Key Verse) Even though they had been persecuted for their faith, and had to leave their homes, the Christians **“who were scattered went about preaching the word”**. (**verse 4**)

Romans 10: 13 contains this wonderful promise, **“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved”**. But the next verse asks some very pointed questions! **“How are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?”** (**verse 14**) So God expects us to go and tell others about Him, that they may be saved too.

We are not all preachers in the sense of standing up and preaching a sermon as Peter did in **Acts 2**. But the woman of Samaria and the healed man of **Mark 5** probably didn't preach a sermon. They just told other people what Jesus had said or done for them. Anyone can do that!

Have you friends, members of your family, or neighbours who are not saved? Look for opportunities to speak to them about the Lord Jesus and the Bible, perhaps inviting them to come to church services to hear the Word of God. It may be that people will not listen to us or will laugh at us. But God has told us to go and tell others and we should obey Him. It would be a wonderful thing if others became Christians as a result of your testimony.

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

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