

# First Steps for New Believers

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## CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 1

### NEW BIRTH

#### **Bible Memory Verses: John 3:3,5,6.**

"In reply Jesus declared, I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God... I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit."

Let us see first of all why we must be 'born again' as Jesus said. Here is 'the picture', the situation spelt out; write out on a separate sheet the verses in brackets which explains 'the picture.'

God created all (Psalm 24:1). He has set standards which we must reach if we are to have fellowship with Him.

As we are all sinners, both by birth and practice (Romans 3:23), none of us could ever reach that standard, yet we were made of God (Colossians 1:16).

Jesus is the Son of God (Romans 1:3-4), Himself Divine. He left the Father's side and became a man like us (Hebrews 2:14), though without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

During His earthly life He did meet God's standards (John 17:4). He offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice to God, taking the punishment that our sins deserved (2 Corinthians 5:21).

He was raised from the dead and ascended back to the Father (Ephesians 1:20). Now God offers salvation (a relationship with God) to all who will accept it as a free gift, purchased by the blood of Jesus, because the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

So we can see why Peter could say "and there is salvation in and through no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by and in which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 Amplified Bible).

### **How, then, do you become a Christian?**

As our picture shows and our memory verses say, we need to be born into the family of God through Faith (believing) in the sacrifice that Jesus Christ has made on our behalf. This is clearly illustrated in John 1:12-13 which says "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, not of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

### **We can see, then, that we are NOT Christians because**

1. We were born in a "Christian" country. Billy Graham once said "You may be born in a garage, but it doesn't make you into a motor car. The only spiritual kingdom we are naturally born into is Satan's kingdom, the 'dominion of darkness'. (Colossians 1:13).
2. We have **Christian** parents. Spiritual life is not of flesh and blood, God has no grandchildren, only children, (John 3:6). Each generation needs to know God for itself.
3. We do our best and live a good life, we don't hurt anyone. The Bible teaches that salvation is "not because of works", (Ephesians 2:8-9). It isn't what we do or even what we refrain from doing that makes us Christian.
4. We were Christened or baptised as a baby. Scripture knows nothing of this and scripture is our guide (see PAPER 3).
5. We go through some ritual or share in a sacrament (baptism or breaking of bread). See Galatians 6:15 and Hebrews 10:11-14.
6. We join a church (1 John 2:19).

None of these things are effective, we need to be "born again." This is an inward, spiritual experience, an encounter with Jesus Christ which puts us into a right relationship with God as his children. People sometimes refer to it as "being saved", "getting converted" or being "born again." To have had such an experience is the most vital thing in the world for you as an individual. There are two parts to it: "repentance to God and... faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21). You receive this free gift when:

1. You see sin as the hindrance to being right with God.
2. Recognise the futility of your own efforts to win God's favour.
3. Determine with God's help, to forsake your sin - repentance.
4. Realise that Jesus is the ONLY way of salvation.
5. Recognise that trusting Him means submitting your life totally to Him as your Lord.

6. You receive Him personally, by faith, as your rescuer and Lord.

You now have ETERNAL LIFE!

You are SAVED!

You are BORN AGAIN!

You are in GOD'S FAMILY!

By faith in what God has promised - 2 Peter 1:3-4.

Write out and consider these Bible verses:-

John 9:16

John 5:24

Romans 10:9

### **What happens at the New Birth?**

Here are a few of the wonderful things that happen. There are many more!

1. Born of God - see John 1:12-13 above.

2. A new creation - write out on separate sheet 2 Corinthians 5:17.

3. A new kingdom - write out also Colossians 1:13.

4. Passed from death to life - see John 5:24 above.

5. Redeemed (bought back) - 1 Peter 1:18-19: "You must know (recognise) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless, fruitless way of living inherited by tradition from your forefathers, not with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but you were purchased with the precious blood of Christ the Messiah, like that of a sacrificial lamb without blemish or spot." (Amplified Bible)

6. Saved from sin - write out Matthew 1:21, Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14.

7. Fellowships with God and His children - 1 John 1:3 "What we have seen and ourselves heard we are also telling you, so that you too may realise and enjoy fellowship as partners and partakers with us, and this fellowship that we have, which is a distinguishing mark of Christian, is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ, the Messiah."

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 2

## ASSURANCE

### **Bible Memory Verses: 1 John 5:11-13**

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life: he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Having now understood the importance of being "born again" in our last study, we need to come to a place where we can 'relax into the things of God'. If we doubt our salvation this relaxing is impossible, like sitting in a chair that you are not sure will hold you.

It is interesting, and profitable, to read through the first epistle of John, where there are at least 30 references to things that we can "know." See how many you can find and fit in with the seven points below. (Note especially 1 John 2:3, 2:20, 3:2, 3:19 and 5.13).

### **How can I be sure I am saved?**

When we look at the Bible, we find that there are several means by which we may be certain of salvation. Here are seven principal means of assurance and it is worth noting that all are objective evidences; nowhere does the scripture tell us that we are saved because we "feel saved" - Look again at John 3:6 and see that feelings originate in the flesh.

#### 1. THE CLEAR TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH WE RECEIVE BY FAITH

In John 6:37, Jesus said:

The Bible is very plain that we are saved because we have put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, we can believe God's word - see Hebrews 6:16-20, John 6:68, where Peter said to Jesus,  
"Lord

and Mark 4:13-20. If we have met the condition of asking Christ into our lives, the Bible - God's Word - tells us that we are saved. Write out Romans 10:13:

and also Galatians 3:26

## 2. THE INNER WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THAT WE HAVE BEEN MADE CHILDREN OF GOD

Romans 8:15-16 says

This is not a 'feeling' or an 'emotion' but much more a dawning awareness born in the depth of our spirit that we are God's children, we are Spirit's people - John 6:63, Galatians 4:6-7

## 3. THE DISCOVERY THAT, AS WE OBEY HIS WILL, GOD IS WORKING WITH US.

God has committed Himself to those who are His children and has promised to reveal Himself in and through His people. Philippians 2:12:

(also see James 2:21-24, Romans 6:15-18, Mark 16:16-18).

## 4. THE DESIRE TO BECOME LIKE THE LORD JESUS

Romans 8:29 tells us:

As we commit our lives to Christ, He begins changing us, making us like Himself. (See also 1 Thessalonians 5:5-6, 2 Corinthians 3:15-18, 1 Peter 1:14-16)

## 5. THE CHASTENING PROCESS CHRIST PUTS US THROUGH

See what Romans 5:3-5 says

Jesus was perfected and learned obedience through suffering (Hebrews 5:8-9), and we also are perfected and learn obedience the same way (Phillipians 3:10-11). See also Hebrews 12:4-11.

## 6. THE LOVE OF THE BROTHERS

Look particularly at 1 John 3:14 which says

If God loved each of us enough to die for us, and His nature is being formed in us, we will love one another. Look also at John 13:34-35, and 1 Peter 1:22-23.

## 7. BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

Write out 2 Corinthians 5:5

Now also read Acts 5:32, Ephesians 1:13-14, Hebrews 2:3-4. See how the baptism in the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a "seal" and "a deposit".

Other verses relevant to today's subject can be found in Philippians 3:20-21, Ephesians 4:22-24, Colossians 3:9-10, Titus 2:11-14.

In the light of all this, can you SAY WITH CONFIDENCE THAT YOU ARE BORN AGAIN? (2 Timothy 1:12). Then expect to grow in God and go on to further experience in Him.

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 3

## WATER BAPTISM

### **Bible Memory Verses: 1 Peter 3:20-21**

"In the ark only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...."

### **Every believer needs to be baptised**

The Bible makes it very plain that every believer needs to be baptised. It is such an integral part of Christian initiation that the New Testament takes it for granted that a profession of faith in Christ will be followed more or less immediately by water baptism. Consider the following verses:

Acts 2:41 "Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

Acts 18:8 "...and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptised."

It is a condition of membership of this church that you have been baptised by immersion as a believer, or that you are willing to be baptised at the earliest opportunity.

### **Why be baptised?**

Baptism is closely linked with believing in Jesus Christ. Some scriptures place them side by side as part of becoming a Christian:

Mark 16:6 "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Acts 2:38 "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins may be forgiven."

Acts 22:16 "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on His name."

Matthew 28:19 "...Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

This explains why water baptism is regarded as being of such importance that it is a requirement for membership.

### **What pictures and examples do we find in the Bible?**

1. Noah and the flood - See memory text.

2. Children of Israel at the Red Sea - 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. Exodus 14. Answer the following questions:

a) What did they leave behind?

b) Who were they dependent upon?

c) Where were they going?

3. Jesus at the Jordan - Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-10 and Luke 3:21-22. Can you find two reasons why Jesus was baptised? You may find the key to one reason in Matthew 4:19.

a)

b)

4. Early Christians.

In the first paragraph of this study you have seen some verses in Acts which show this truth. Can you find any more?

### **What does baptism do for the believer?**

1. It is an act of obedience to Christ a clear-cut demonstration that we know and acknowledge our new Lord, who said:

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

There is great blessing and satisfaction in obeying the Lord. Our baptism will set a pattern of obedience to His Lordship in our lives as a whole.

2. There is a cutting away of the old nature as the dominant power in our lives. Just as Israelite boys in the Old Testament days received physical circumcision, so God's new-born children today receive at their baptism a spiritual circumcision, or a circumcision of the heart. Like all God's blessings this must be received by faith.

Deuteronomy 30:6 - "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart... so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and will all your soul..." Colossians 2:11-12 (Amplified New Testament) - In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but in a (spiritual) circumcision (performed by) Christ, by stripping off the body of the flesh (the whole corrupt, carnal nature with its passions and lusts). (Thus you were circumcised when) you were buried with Him in (your) baptism, in which you were also raised with Him (to a new life) through (your) faith in the working of God (as displayed) when He raised Him up from the dead."



### 3. Other Scripture references state:

Romans 6:14 "...baptised into his death..."

Galatians 3:24 "...clothed with Christ..."

Ephesians 4:5 "...one body and one Spirit...one hope...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God..."

#### **Objection!! "I have been baptised as a baby"**

1. Baptism is not for babies. Not once does the New Testament refer to such a practice. BAPTISM IS FOR BELIEVERS ONLY, which implies a certain level of mental development. (See Mark 16:16 "...whoever believes and is baptised..." John 4:1 and 2 "...Jesus gained and baptised more disciples...", Acts 2:38 "...repent and be baptised...", Acts 18:8). We have seen children being baptised, but only when they had a clear understanding of Jesus as their Lord and Saviour and because they wanted to obey Him by baptism.

2. Baptism by sprinkling is a contradiction of terms. The word "baptise" is an Anglicisation of a Greek word meaning to dip, immerse, submerge or plunge into a liquid. It was used by dyers to describe the act of dipping material in dye. New Testament baptism was by immersion.

Acts 8:38-39 "Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him, when they came up out of the water..."

Mark 1:9-19 "At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water..."

#### **You and Baptism**

1. Have you been "born again"? - if yes, then,
2. Have you been baptised by immersion - if no, then,
3. Are you willing to obey the Lord Jesus and be baptised as soon as this can be arranged?

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 4

## BAPTISM IN HOLY SPIRIT

### **Bible Memory Verses: Acts 2:1-4**

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

A further part of the blessings of our salvation is the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which is God's means of bringing us into the realm of spiritual power. He wants us not only to enjoy the new life He has given us, but also to be effective messengers in transmitting the Gospel to others.

John 1:33 – "...The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is He who will baptise with the Holy Spirit."

Acts 1:8 - "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Let us look at five questions which will help us to understand the scripture and lead us into the blessing.

### **Who is to be baptised?**

This blessing is not just for a select few, but for all believers. God has promised, "I will pour out my Spirit on all people." (Acts 2:17) Peter clearly proclaimed concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit, "The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call." (Acts 2:39)

Besides, if all God's children are to be His witnesses, and if it is impossible to be an effective witness without the baptism in the Holy Spirit, then ALL God's children should expect to receive Him.

### **Why be baptised in the Holy Spirit?**

a) Through the baptism in the Holy Spirit we receive power (Acts 1:8) and ability (Acts 9:17-22)

b) We are enabled to pray in the Spirit and sing praises in the Spirit, as distinct from normal prayer and praise expressed in ordinary language. (See Romans 8:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 14:15)

c) Our own spirit becomes sensitive to the 'voice' of God's Spirit (see Acts 13:2, Mark 13:11 and Acts 1:2)

d) We become eligible for the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 19:6) and a new level of God's power in our lives (1 Corinthians 14;1 Corinthians 1:5-7, Acts 1:8)

e) We begin to live our daily lives 'in the Spirit', by the Spirit's power and should be constantly being filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18 and Colossians 3;16)

### **How do we receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?**

Sometimes God baptises believers in the Spirit by a sovereign act. This is what happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and to the household of Cornelius in Acts 10. At other times, it is received by the laying on of hands, as in Samaria. (Acts 8, Acts 19:6). Individually, however, we receive the Holy Spirit baptism in the same way we receive all the blessings of God...by faith. Acts 2:38 "...receive the gift..." Hebrews 11:6 "...must believe..."

What did Jesus say in Luke 11:13?

So we see that it is important that we ask Him for the gift of the Holy Spirit. Having prayed, and believing God has heard our prayer we begin to praise God and worship Him with thanksgiving. This is a powerful means of drawing near to His presence to receive the Holy Spirit. "Come near to God and He will come near to you." (James 4:8).

As we become aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit, there is a breaking within us and our spirit springs up to respond to the Spirit of God. At this point, an anointed servant of God may lay hands upon us to impart the Holy Spirit, just as Paul in Acts 19:6, but this is not always necessary.

### **Must those who receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit ALWAYS speak in tongues?**

This is a wrong question! In 1 Corinthians 14:5 Paul says, "I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you to prophesy." What he is in fact saying is that we should both speak in tongues and also prophesy.

When you receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, you can speak in tongues, you should expect to speak in tongues, you will speak in tongues, provided you do not let prejudice or fear hinder the flow of the Holy Spirit.

According to James 3:8 the tongue is the hardest member of the body to tame, and God wants to demonstrate His mighty power in the toughest member first. So expect to speak in tongues when you are baptised in the Holy Spirit... expect also to prophesy.

As the Holy Spirit rests upon us, He stimulates us to praise the Lord, and our own words seem inadequate to praise God as we should. The Holy Spirit then leads and encourages us, but never forces us, to speak in tongues, enabling our organs of speech to form strange words and syllables as we yield to His prompting.

Once we begin, we should expect the language to be spontaneous and fluent. We will not understand the words we are saying, nor should we expect to, "For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed no one understands him because he utters mysteries in the Spirit." (1 Corinthians 14:2)

There will then be no doubt, either to ourselves or to others, as to whether or not we are filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?**

Since it is within every believer's power to cleanse their conscience before God and men, and to ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit, we believe that a candidate for membership of the Church should experience Holy Spirit baptism. Opportunity will be provided for you to be ministered to if this is necessary and IF YOU SO DESIRE!

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 5

## THE WORD OF GOD

### Bible memory verses: Psalm 119:11

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

### Why is the Bible so important?

The Bible is the inspired Word of God:

2 Peter 1:20-21 "Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 "All scripture is God breathed and is useful for

so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Acts 1:16 "\_\_\_\_\_ the scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David."

John 6:63 "The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."

(see also John 6:31,32,33,35,50,51).

John 1:14 "The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us."

Philippians 2:16 "\_\_\_\_\_ holding forth the Word of life\_\_\_\_\_"

Jesus Christ (the Word of God) revealed in the Bible, the focus of the Bible, ministering His Life through the Bible. See John 6:68 "\_\_\_\_\_ you have the words of eternal life\_\_\_\_\_."

The eternal durability and sufficiency of the word "\_\_\_\_\_ eternal life \_\_\_\_\_" is thus shown. See also Psalm 119:89, Matthew 24:35, 1 Peter 1:23,25.

### What effect will reading the Bible have?

Psalm 119:11 (AV) "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

2 Timothy 3:16 "\_\_\_\_\_ is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training \_\_\_\_\_ in righteousness\_\_\_\_\_ thoroughly equipped \_\_\_\_\_".

Romans 15:14 "For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope."

Romans 10:17 "Faith comes by hearing \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of God."

James 1:18 "He chose to give us birth through the Word of truth \_\_\_\_\_." (see also 1 Peter 2:23).

Ephesians 6:13-18 " \_\_\_\_\_ the full armour of God and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" \_\_\_\_\_."

Psalm 119:105 "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

A treasure chest of promises, ministering faith and the life of God to His people. We must hear God's word to receive essential faith.

Therefore:

- 1) We must read the Bible daily (Psalm 119:97, Acts 17:11).
- 2) We must study and search the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15, Hebrews 5:11-14)
- 3) We must know, obey and believe the Bible (2 Timothy 3:15)
- 4) We must use the Word as a weapon against our enemy the devil
  - a) to resist temptation (see Jesus in Matthew 4:1-11, 1 Corinthians 10:13)
  - b) to receive spiritual victory (Ephesians 6:10-18, especially vv 12 and 17)

### **Has God spoken to you through His Word?**

Thank Him if He has, and ask Him to continue speaking to you, taking Samuel's words (1 Samuel 3:10)

"SPEAK, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING."

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 6

## PRAYER

### Bible memory verses: Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

### What is prayer?

We are God's children and need to learn to communicate with Him and let Him speak to us. When we are babies we let our parents know we need something because we cry. As we grow up we learn to speak and can communicate our needs or answer questions.

- 1 Prayer is talking with God (see Jesus's prayer in John 17)
- 2 Prayer is an exercise of faith. (Hebrews 11:6, Matthew 21:22, James 1:5-8)
- 3 Prayer is having communion with God. (1 John 5:14-15)
- 4 Prayer is admitting our need. (Luke 18:9-14)

### Who should pray?

Colossians 4:2 "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful"

Matthew 6:5 "When you pray..."

Philippians 4:6 "...by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your requests."

1 Peter 4:7 "...therefore be clear-minded and self-controlled so that you can pray."

Matthew 26:41 "...watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation " .

1 Timothy 2:8 "...men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer..."

Every disciple of Jesus Christ should pray

### How should we pray?

In Luke 11:1 we read that Jesus' disciples asked this same question. Look at how Jesus replied to them. In Matthew 6:5-14 the picture is made even clearer. There are clearly 4 "DO NOTS" and 4 DO'S in this short passage.

DO NOT be like the \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 5)

DO NOT keep on \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 7)

DO NOT be like \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 8)

DO NOT be \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 15)

But when you pray

DO go \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 6)

DO close the \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 6)

DO \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 14)

DO pray to your Father in \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 6)

According to Jesus our prayers should be simple and uncomplicated. He gave the greatest key to prayer in Matthew 26:39 when He said, "...not as I will, but as you will." It is not us asking for what we WANT allowing God to tell us what we NEED, and He has therefore purposed to give us.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 suggest that we should "...pray continually..." to be in constant communication with God.

### **So we should pray**

- a) simply
- b) not hypocritically
- c) to the Father
- d) always - Continually and therefore
- e) everywhere.
- f) in the name of Jesus

### **Why pray?**

Matthew 26:41 "...pray so that you will not fall into temptation..."

Matthew 9:38 "...ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send our workers..."

Romans 15:30-31 "...join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. ..."

James 5:13 "Is anyone of you in trouble? He should pray.."

James 5:15 " And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well..."

### **Prayer involves two aspects:- (see James 4:7)**

a) Submission to God - humbling ourselves before Him, seeking of Him a right and straight way (see 2 Chronicles 7:14, Ezra 8:23, Acts 12:5)

b) Resisting the devil - Praying against his kingdom structures releasing the power of God's Word, praying for the saints of God and the work of God. (Matthew 9:38, Romans 15:30-31, Mark 9:29, Matthew 6:13)

### **Opposition to our praying will arise in three areas:-**

SELF The self-life (we sometimes call it "the old nature") Romans 7:18-25

SIN separates us from God and breaks the communion (remedy) 1 John 1:7-9

SATAN he will always oppose our praying Ephesians 6:12

Read Matthew 26:36-46. Think about the opposition in that story.



**Conditions for successful prayer life**

Forgiving attitude (Matthew 6:14)

Faithfulness (Mark 11:24)

Humility (Luke 18:14)

Correct family relationships (1 Peter 3:7)

Clean lives from sin (James 5:16)

Clear uncontrolled mind (1 Peter 4:7)

In God's will (1 John 5:14)

Persistence (Luke 8:17)

Lack of anger or dispute (1 Timothy 2:8)

Submissiveness (2 Chronicles 7:14)

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 7

## SHARING THE GOSPEL

### **Bible Memory Verses: Luke 8:39**

"Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over the town how much Jesus had done for him.

Jesus plainly expresses the importance of every Christian being a witness to Christ before men. Scripture indicates that our salvation is secured as we are prepared to acknowledge and confess our allegiance to Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9 is a favourite verse, it says:

### **Why share?**

After our initial confession of the Lord Jesus we should want to continue as His witnesses. God's word shows the importance of this.

1. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation and need to fulfil it. 2 Corinthians 5:17-20
2. We have been given instructions to take this Gospel message all over the world. Matthew 28:18-20
3. We are baptised in the Holy Spirit so that the Church may continue the ministry that Jesus began. Acts 1:1, Acts 1:8
4. We have been chosen in Christ Jesus to be fruitful. John 15:16
5. Jesus is God's faithful witness, as He lives in each of us, as we are made like Him, we will be faithful witnesses also. Revelation 1:5
6. Faith undoubtedly grows as we share the life of Christ with others. 1 Timothy 6:12

Many other scriptures speak of the need to witness for the Lord Jesus, because the witness to Him is in our hearts.

Write out here 1 John 5:9-10

### **What does "witness" mean?**

1. "Those whose lives and actions testified to the worth and effect of faith, and whose faith received witness in scripture." (Vines Dictionary of New Testament Words), or...

2. "One who bears witness by his death (Vines).

By His death and resurrection Jesus has brought us into a whole new dimension of life, but not an enhanced "old life." When we were baptised, our "old lives" were buried and we were raised to live this new life "in Him." (Romans 6:4, Galatians 2:20). As we live this "new life" we are all the time witnessing to the reality and power of Jesus Christ.

### **Who should witness?**

Read Mark 16:15-18 and then carefully answer these questions:

1. What is our commission?

2. What happens to those who do not believe?

3. What kind of people demonstrate God's power with those miraculous signs?

4. Does this include you? YES/NO Why?

Read Acts 8:1-7 and answer these questions

1. Was it the Church leaders (the apostles) who preached everywhere?

2. What did Philip proclaim?

3. Did miraculous signs inspire confidence in what he said? YES/NO

4. What happened in the city after Philip had preached?

So God's Word tells us that each and every believer should be a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

### **How do we share?**

Write out Acts 5:32

Who else, in addition to the apostles, does this scripture say is witness to Jesus Christ?

Who has God given the Holy Spirit to?

Does this include you? YES/NO

Now read 1 John 1:2-3 and notice:-

1. We share Jesus' life from our personal experience of His working in our lives, and,
2. We share Jesus' life so that those who hear may come into "fellowship" (sharing) with God the Father and Jesus the Son.

Have you shared the life of Jesus with others? He wants you to, and has given you the Holy Spirit to help you do just that, let Him work through you and enjoy the thrill of seeing others come to Christ, (always remember that it is God who draws men to Jesus Christ, not you - John 6:44).

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 8

## FAITH

### **Bible Memory Verses: Hebrews 11:6**

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."

Hebrews 11 is the great faith chapter of the Bible, sometimes known as the "gallery of faith". It tells us how great men of faith in the Old Testament overcame difficulties and persecution. The Bible makes it very plain that faith is essential for the Christian life. Four times we read in scripture that "The righteous will live by faith." (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38)

### **Why is faith important?**

Our memory verse makes one reason very plain; we cannot please God without faith. Hebrews 10:22 explains a little more that we need faith to draw near to God. We read why this is so in Romans 14:23 where it says:-

"... and everything that does not come from faith is\_\_\_\_\_."

We saw in our first study that it is sin that is the barrier to us coming to God. He has told us that if we put our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, our sin problem is dealt with, we are "justified" which means, made to be righteous before God "through faith" (Romans 5:1). If God has told us we are righteous in His sight through Christ and we don't believe it, we are telling Him that He is lying!! How can we draw near to God in such a way? Faith is central and essential to our whole Christian way of life.

### **What is faith?**

Hebrews 11:1 tells us something of what faith is, it says:

God's Word tells us that those things which cannot be seen with the natural eye are really the things that matter eternally.

Read 2 Corinthians 4:18 through to 5:5. Faith taking what God has said and putting our trust in Him and His promises rather than our feelings, circumstances, desires or even what our natural senses tell us. Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words, says that the word translated 'faith' means:-

"...a firm persuasion, ...a conviction based upon hearing..."

Rather than "running away from reality" since God's Word is the only thing that will endure for ever, we are, by putting our trust in Him, "running into reality" - the objective reality of eternity (see 1 Peter 1:23-25, Matthew 24:35, Psalm 119:152).

Faith is accepting God's word as true, and acting upon it, so that true faith always results in action - even if it is only the action of will determining to trust God and do nothing ourselves. (James 2:17-22). The evidence that we are accepting God's Word is clearly explained in John 8:31-32 which says:

"...if you hold to my \_\_\_\_\_ you are really my \_\_\_\_\_. Then you will know the \_\_\_\_\_, and the \_\_\_\_\_ will set you free."

This is what happens to us when we come to God with faith as Hebrews 11:6 says.

How and from where does faith come?

Write out Romans 10:17

What this tells us is that faith comes by the message of God's Word, so then it is necessary to read and study his word, to know what He is saying to us. In Romans 1:17 we find that our righteousness (being right in God's sight) is by faith "from first to last", a thought made a little more plain by Hebrews 12:2 where we read:-

" Let us fix our eyes on Jesus the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of our faith" .

Jesus Christ (the centre of God's Word) is the source of faith.

These verses together make plain that the first key to understanding how faith comes is hearing, and accepting, God's Word.

The second key is believing. look at the example of Abraham in Romans 4:16-25. Another example of how faith works is found in Hebrews 11:7, where we can see:-

1. Roots of Noah's faith Response of Noah = warned of God
2. Response of Noah = moved with holy fear prepared an ark
3. Rewards of Noah's faith = to the saving of his house.

So we see that faith is essential for the Christian life and that faith comes from Christ through His Word. Let us together flow in faith and in love as did the early church believers. Write out 2 Thessalonians 1:3, which says:

# CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES COURSE PAPER 9

## GUIDANCE

### **Bible Memory Verse: Ephesians 5:17**

"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lords will is."

Many times we are encouraged in the Bible to discover and do the will of God, not because we have to...or else; but rather because we love Him and we know that He loves us. We may trust that His desire and will for our life is only good. Our desire, like that of Jesus, should be that we want to please Him.

Write out the following verses:-

John 6:38

John 17:4

In a similar way we find the apostle Paul following Jesus' example of knowing and fulfilling God's will in his life. Look at Acts 22 verses 10 and 14, and 2 Timothy 4:7, and answer these questions:

1. Was Paul told what God's will for his life was? Yes/No
2. Was there a role that Paul was chosen for? Yes/No
3. Did Paul set out to fulfil God's will? Yes/No
4. Did he know when the job was done? Yes/No

When we read 1 Corinthians 2:1, we see that both Jesus and Paul are examples for us to follow. Our number one priority is to know and do the will of God, it is a constant exercise in discovering and obeying it, for God will lead us one step at a time.

### **Why is God's will important?**

1. God wants to fulfil His purpose in our generation through us, as He did with King David Acts 13:36 cp verse 22, John 15:16.
2. We bring praise and honour to God when we do what He wants us to do - John 17:4, Ephesians 1:9-12.
3. We miss opportunities to share the life of Christ with others when we don't do His will. Ephesians 5:15-17.
4. God's promises are fulfilled to us as we do His will. Hebrews 10:36

5. We are assured of eternal life as we fulfil His will. 1 John 2:17

6. We find entrance into God's kingdom as we obey His will. Matthew 7:21

7. We please God as we exercise faith in Christ by finding and doing what He wills for us. Colossians 1:9-12

Many other verses throughout the Bible speak of the importance of both knowing and doing His will.

### **How can we discover the will of God?**

There are many things which Jesus has commanded us to do:

In John 15:12 we are commanded to

In Matthew 28:19 we are told to go and

In Luke 10:2 to ask him to

Principle No.1.

Without regularly reading God's word we will not discover His will. He wants to speak to us through His word. Psalm 119:105.

Principle No.2.

Without prayer we have no communication with our Father and cannot discover the joy of knowing the will, or mind, or plans and intentions of God for and in our lives, what was it that Jesus taught His disciples to pray in Matthew 6:10.

Principle No.3.

Be willing to do whatever it is He wants you to do. Someone has said, "Jesus will only lead you where you are willing to go." A submitted life is the greatest sacrifice we can make to the Lord.

Romans 12:1 says:

and 1 Samuel 15:22 likewise states:-

"\_\_\_\_\_ to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams \_\_\_\_\_."



### **Guiding Lights by Ralph Mahoney of world M.A.P.**

1. An inward conviction - guidance always starts here. Acts 20:22, 25, 29-31.
2. Confirmation in scripture - See Isaiah 8:20, test everything by God's word.
3. Prophetic Confirmation - Acts 20:23, 21:4-11 - not always required.
4. Godly counsel - Acts 21:4, Proverbs 11:4, Psalm 1. Always acts as a useful check; but may not always be right.
5. Circumstantial evidence - Does not always happen, but doors do open... usually.
6. The peace of God - Philippians 4:6-7, peace of God acts as an umpire.
7. God's provision - Isaiah 42:16-19. "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." (James Hudson Taylor).

### **What helps do we have?**

First and foremost we need to see that God has promised to guide us in our lives. Look at and consider Psalm 42:8, Isaiah 58:11, John 8:12. God's promise is our guarantee that He will speak to us if we are willing to let Him. In addition we have:

- 1 Prayer, 1 John 5:14
- 2 God's Word
- 3 Psalm 40:8
- 4 Desire to be like Jesus which means doing God's will from the heart, Ephesians 6:6.
- 5 Renewed minds, Romans 12:1-2.

If there is a secret, then maybe it can be expressed as:

COMMUNION WITH GOD AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD.