

## How to Obtain the Best Possible Life By Paul R. Blake

How do I become a Christian and obtain the wonderful new life of a Christian? This is a noble and important question, and it deserves an answer from the word of God.

The process by which one becomes a Christian, when followed by the whole of his being, brings new life through salvation in Jesus Christ. In addition, obedience to the Gospel renews living by setting him free from sin, bringing peace in this life and hope in the everlasting life to come. Furthermore, his whole manner of life is changed by the plan of salvation when it is obeyed in full faith from the heart. By the plan of salvation, one gains the best possible life.  
Hear

Before one can follow the Divinely ordained plan of salvation, it naturally follows that he must know it in its original, unchanged form. There are many schemes of redemption taught by religious leaders, but the Lord has given only one valid method of becoming a child of God. There is only "one faith" (Eph. 4:5) given only "once for all" (Jude 3) by the Father to save man from his sins. He who desires salvation must humbly and carefully listen to it. Jesus charged His countrymen with dulling their hearing so that they would not absorb the word of God (Matt. 13:15-16). Clearly, those who listen can be converted, and those who hear will be blessed. Therefore, the first step in becoming a Christian is to HEAR; to listen intently and carefully to what the Lord has said.

Hearing brings enlightenment through the knowledge of God, dispelling the darkness of ignorance. This knowledge has the power to develop responsive faith within the careful listener. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). The word of God brightly lights up the way out of sin and into righteousness. David said in praise to God: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105). Knowing the truth by means of whole-heartedly hearing the word of God gives one the means whereby he can be set free from his sins. In a prayer, the Savior said to the Father: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). The reaction of the honest hearer to the preaching of the truth is best demonstrated by Peter's audience at the close of the gospel sermon on Pentecost. The hearers immediately asked what they must do (Acts 2:37). Hearing the word is the first step to becoming a Christian and obtaining the best life possible. Hearing is itself a life changing action that provides needed guidance to the lost listener.

BELIEVE. Faith follows hearing the word of God. The careful listener becomes a believer in God. This belief leads him further along the path to becoming a Christian. It is essential that the hearer believe in God and in His plan to be saved from his sins. The writer of Hebrews clearly states that faith is vital to anyone who would please God (11:6). Faith provides the motivation necessary to make the changes that will make one a Christian. Strong belief moves him to careful obedience to the Gospel, for without faith, he will not effectively obey and will remain in a lost condition. The apostle Paul spoke of people who fell short of pleasing God through a lack of belief. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Rom. 10:16). One must believe before he can become a Christian.

Besides leading unto salvation (Rom. 10:9-10), faith also provides purpose and meaning to life. A person no longer needs to wander aimlessly through life, pointlessly living until he dies. Faith gives one an understanding of who he is, why he is here, and where he is going when life is over. All important questions are answered by a well informed faith in God.

**REPENT.** A strong faith will generate a change in the believer's moral purpose in life. The believer must also repent of his sins and regret a life lived without God's unchanging word. Repentance becomes the means by which man turns away from sin, changes his direction in life, and embraces right living. The Ephesians were told to put off the old man of sin, change their way of thinking, and to put on the new man (4:22-24). First, one repents by sorrowing over the sins he has committed, sins that made it necessary for Christ to die on the cross for him. Second, he evolves or changes his view of sin and righteousness to conform to God's way of viewing them. Third, he focuses his attention and will on doing only those things that please the Lord. If a believer chooses not to repent, he cannot be saved. In the words of Jesus Christ: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

By repentance, one steps even closer to becoming a Christian. In turning from sin, he develops a better character... a character that will enable him to walk faithfully as a Christian upon completing his obedience to the Gospel. He is changing into a better person, which is one of the blessings of becoming a Christian.

**CONFESS.** Besides believing and repenting, God expects the petitioner for salvation to declare his faith unashamedly before others. When one confesses Jesus Christ as the Son of God, he professes the maturity of his faith. He now believes that God took an active role in sending His only begotten Son into the world to pay the price for the sins of humankind. He believes that Jesus Christ is Immanuel (God with us), and that He has the power to save man from his sins. When one confesses his faith in Jesus, all witnesses to that confession know that the speaker is moved by the word of God to obey the Gospel. One who confesses Christ before men prepares the way for Jesus to declare his name before God. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10:32).

When the Ethiopian eunuch heard the preaching of the Gospel, he responded by desiring immersion. When Philip asked if he believed, he answered by saying, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). Man will never speak greater or higher words than these. Confessing Jesus as the son of God is a demonstration of courage and a herald of one's desire to become a Christian.

**BE BAPTIZED.** Finally, the confessor must be baptized to become a Christian. It is only through baptism that he becomes a partaker in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Savior (Rom. 6:3-4). Only in baptism are sins washed away (Acts 22:16). It is by baptism that one is saved (Mark 16:16). Baptism puts him in Christ (Gal. 3:27). If one is not baptized, he falls short of his goal of becoming a Christian.

When one is baptized, he becomes spiritually clean; free from all of his sins. He enters into the family of God as one of the Father's cherished children. He has access to all the blessings, rights, and privileges of that family. There exists no greater joy than that of the obedient believer who rises from the waters of baptism as a new creature in Christ.

In view of what is written in scripture, it is evident that the plan of salvation not only saves one from sin and makes him a Christian, but it also changes his life and the way he lives it, making it the best life possible. Hearing the word enlightens him (2Tim. 3:15). Believing the word motivates him (Hebrews 10:39). Repenting changes his direction in life (2Cor. 7:10). Confessing Jesus as the Christ declares his faith and desire to become a Christian (Rom. 10:10). Finally, being Baptized changes his life, changes his living, and gives him new life (Rom. 6:6-8). By this process, and this alone, one becomes a Christian and gains the best life possible.