

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

1. No one is born a Christian; we must be born again.

A man named Nicodemus was reared up to reverence God and keep all His commandments. However, he was troubled, confused and in need of some answers and therefore made a visit to Jesus. Jesus told this very religious man, *"...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3). Becoming a Christian doesn't happen when we become determined to live right, be right and do right (although doing right is a good thing). Jesus was saying in essence, Nicodemus, you are going to have to start from the beginning. We are born in sin for the Bible says, *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"* (Rom. 5:12). In the same way we have inherited physical traits from our parents and ancestors, we have inherited a nature prone to sin from the original couple in the Garden of Eden. No matter how many good things we do, we can never do enough to earn a relationship with God. You may decide from this point forward you will do good and right things in life. You may do enough good things so that to everyone else you appear righteous, but if you have not been born again you will never attain righteousness. God says, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away"* (Isaiah 64:6). God declares our self-determined righteousness in His holy eyes as filthy. In the same way the wind is in control of a fallen leaf, so also the sin we are born with will take us eventually in the wrong direction. Again Jesus said, *"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"* (John 3:7).

2. We cannot birth ourselves.

If you were to ask me what did I do to be born physically, I would answer, "Nothing." I give the credit to God, Mom, Dad and the doctor (in that order). The Bible declares righteous accomplishment is, *"...Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts"* (Zechariah 4:6). Jesus said, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6). In the parallel of the two births, the Lord Jesus was declaring the new birth as a spiritual transaction apart from human effort. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God"* (Ephesians 2:8).

3. What is the cost of becoming a Christian?

After Jesus tells us the new birth is necessary to becoming a Christian, he explains the way, the means and the end in John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but*

have everlasting life." The price for our sin is separation from God. Therefore if one dies outside of embracing Christ in the new birth there is only one place to go: *"Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming..."* (Isaiah 14:9). God loves you so much that He gave His one and only virgin born, perfect Son who was God Himself manifested in human flesh to make this new birth possible. Christ surrendered Himself to the torments of the crowd and the ultimate price for our sins (His death on the cross) to save us from our sins and Hell at the end of our life. For thousands of years throughout the Old Testament, people had been sacrificing animals to show two things: 1) a price must be paid for their sins 2) sorrow for their sins. When Christ died on the cross He accomplished all that was required or would ever be required for time and eternity to save our lost souls. That's why the Bible says, *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us"* (Hebrews 9:12).

4. How does a person receive the new birth?

We must admit we cannot save ourselves. We must agree with God that sin is wrong, but more especially, our sin is wrong: *"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isaiah 59:2). Accept this truth: Christ died as our substitute. He shed His blood for us; He suffered as no other person has ever suffered for you, for me, for the world! *"For He (God, the Father) hath made Him (God, the Son) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (II Corinthians 5:21).

Finally, *"...Repent ye, and believe the gospel (good news!)"* (Mark 1:15). The good news is God will save you and make you His child forever if you repent and believe! Repentance means to be sorry that you have sinned against God and be willing to turn from your own ways to God's ways. *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:9). Jesus said, *"...Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Mark 8:34). What do we believe? We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, God the Son, however, it doesn't become real until we make it personal as the convert did in Acts 8:7, *"...I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"* (Acts 8:7). We must believe that He died for us and rose again from the grave. *"...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"* (I Corinthians 15: 3,4). To help you verbalize a simple but life-changing prayer, pray this prayer or one similar to it, but only if you mean it: *"Dear Lord, I know that I am a sinner, separated from you. I am sorry for my sins. Lord Jesus, I believe you died and rose again to save me. Forgive me of my sins. Come into my heart, Jesus. Please change me and become my Lord and Savior. I love you and give you all there is of me."*

If you prayed that prayer and meant it, then upon the authority of the Word of God you are born again! *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Romans 10:13). You will now have a better life on earth than you can ever

imagine and Heaven at the end. Jesus said, *"...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

This is the simply wonderful and yet the wonderfully simple plan of salvation. I would challenge you to familiarize yourself with it so that you might be able to win anyone to Christ who is willing to be saved. *"...Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you..."* (1 Peter 3:15). *"...and he that winneth souls is wise."* (Proverbs 11:30).

To aid you in your pursuit of lost souls that need Jesus, I would encourage you to mark your Bible with what has been called the Romans Road of Salvation. I would also ask you to consider memorizing these Scriptures so that you might be even more effective in presenting the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (1) Romans 3:10,23
- (2) Romans 5:12
- (3) Romans 6:23
- (4) Romans 5:8
- (5) Romans 10:9,10, 13

I love you and remember our Lord said, *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"* (Mark 16:15).

-Pastor Pope-