

If, however, he is asked to do anything which conflicts with the laws of God, he will obey God rather than man (Acts 4:19,20; 5:28,29). So, Christians will not be active in politics, because Christ is their true and coming king. "The Most High rules in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomever he chooses" (Daniel 4:32). The day is coming when "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15).

Jesus would not let Peter defend him with a sword. He said: "All who draw the sword will die by the sword". Because Christians are asked to live in peace, they will not fight at the dictates of men. They look for the coming of the "Prince of Peace" from heaven.

6. DOES A CHRISTIAN HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT?

Yes, very different from other citizens. A Christian must be guided by spiritual principles, and actively live by them in society. Jesus taught: "Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14).

If we are to be his disciples, we must deny ourselves. Most people want to go their own way. This does not reflect the life of Jesus, who "died for us, that ... we should live together with him" (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

7. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN?

They are two-fold. Godliness has promise for "the life that now is and of that which is to come" (1 Timothy 4:8). Christians rejoice now in God's goodness in giving Jesus to

die for their sins. They have peace in their hearts because Jesus said: "Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

For Christians, the future holds unspeakable joy. They wait for the return of Jesus Christ to the earth to "speak peace to the nations" (Zechariah 9:10). He will give everlasting life to his faithful followers, when "he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33).

Does your present life have great purpose? Do you enjoy peace of mind? What is your hope for the future if it is not with Jesus Christ? Only Jesus offers you everlasting life as God's gift for faithful service.

May you have the courage to follow Jesus now, to believe his teachings, repent and be baptized. As a child of God, you will belong to Him, and "they shall be mine, says the LORD of hosts, on the day that I make them my jewels" (Malachi 3:17).

Please tell us if you would like to know more about Bible teaching and the beliefs of Christadelphians. Would you like:

- Other leaflets in this series?
- A booklet *Who are the Christadelphians?*
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Christadelphian Bible Mission BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

The Christian Life

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. What did the early followers of Jesus Christ believe?
2. What is repentance?
3. What is Christian baptism?
4. How should a Christian behave?
5. How should a Christian relate to this world?
6. Does a Christian have to be different?
7. What are the benefits of being a Christian?

The Apostle John said that God's commandment is to "**believe** on the name of his Son Jesus Christ **and love** one another" (1 John 3:23, NKJV). This *one* commandment includes *two* aspects which cannot be separated. The Christian life is about *believing* and *doing*.

1. WHAT DID THE EARLY FOLLOWERS OF JESUS CHRIST BELIEVE?

They believed that Jesus Christ:

- (a) Was the Son of God (John 5:19-23);

(b) Came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15);

(c) Died and rose again (Acts 2:29-32).

Soon he will:

(d) Return to the earth (Acts 1:11);

(e) Raise the dead (John 6:39,40);

(f) Judge those who are responsible to God (Acts 17:30,31);

(g) Give everlasting life to those who have faithfully followed him (Revelation 2:10);

(h) Establish God's kingdom on earth (Luke 1:32).

These are just some of the beliefs held by the disciples and taught by Jesus and his apostles. Why should we believe differently today? These teachings are there for all Christians to accept.

2. WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Many Jews who had rejected Jesus realised that they had made a big mistake. They were "cut to the heart" and asked, "What shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:37,38).

The same call comes today to all who would follow Jesus. We must repent (have a change of mind), and understand:

(a) That without faith in Jesus, death will be the end;

(b) We can have our sins forgiven because of his perfect obedience to the will of God;

(c) If we turn to him to be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins – our disobedience of God's laws – and follow his way, we can live forever.

What a blessing for those who repent!

3. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN BAPTISM?

Baptism is the complete covering by water of a person old enough to make a personal decision to follow Jesus Christ. By this act, our sins are washed away, and we begin a new life "in Christ". Another leaflet in this series, "Baptism, its meaning and importance" deals with this subject in more detail.

4. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN BEHAVE?

This is a major subject. Although we are ultimately saved by grace, all Christians must show their faith by their works (James 2:17). But what works? Those which are based on having the same attitudes as Jesus. They will help us to do good to all people, especially to those who believe (Galatians 6:10).

We must be teachable, for "disciple" means 'a learner'. Paul said, "In understanding be mature" (1 Corinthians 14:20), while retaining a complete child-like trust in God's promises.

Our task is to grow from the natural ways of men to the spiritual ways of God. We shall be helped by letting "the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Colossians 3:16). Daily we shall pray and read God's word.

We shall be blessed if we are: meek, merciful, pure in hearts, peacemakers, and if we hunger and thirst after righteousness. We are to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:5-14).

In practical living we must: share our Christian faith with those who will listen, love our enemies, forgive men their trespasses, turn the other cheek, and not worry about our lives.

Like Jesus we shall live by the highest moral and ethical standards. Therefore, we shall not try to serve two masters – God and this money-mad world. We shall not commit adultery, or even dwell upon the idea. At all times a Christian must "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). If we fulfil these commands of Jesus, we shall "bear much fruit", and so be his disciples (John 15:8).

These are the high ideals to which a Christian is called. Sometimes we shall fail, for we have not yet been made perfect. We can thank God that when we sin, Jesus our mediator understands our weaknesses. He was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

God forgives all who sincerely confess their sins and who try to do better. We are obliged to do so, because we are followers of Jesus Christ.

5. HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN RELATE TO THIS WORLD?

The prayer of Jesus for his disciples was not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be protected from evil (John 17:15). The Christian life has to be lived "in the world"; that is, in a society which is organised according to human principles.

Wherever possible, a Christian will:

(a) Live at peace with everyone (Romans 12:18);

(b) Respect and obey those in authority (Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17);

(c) Give everyone what is owed to them (Romans 13:7).