

THE ACTIVE CHRISTIAN LIFE

John 3:1-7; 2 Peter 3:18

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: There are countless people who have believed in Jesus and are numbered among Christians. However not everyone is living an active Christian life. Some just don't understand what being a Christian is all about. The disciples of Jesus were called "Christians" at Antioch (*Acts 11:26*) and later on when Paul was witnessing to a king, the king remarked that he was almost persuaded to become a "Christian." (*Acts 26:28*). Peter reminds everyone that whenever a person has to suffer because he/she is a "Christian" to not be ashamed for it is bringing glory and honor to God. Christians have been called disciples of Christ, Saints of the Lord, Brothers and Sisters and other names. "Christian" comes from believers referring to themselves as "Little Christs."

There are many wrong things thought about Christianity, such as living a good life makes one a Christian, or being born into a Christian family makes one a Christian, or joining a Church makes one a Christian, or being baptized makes one a Christian. None of these and many other ideas have any truth to them. So what is it that causes a person to become a Christian and then what kind of life is he/she to live?

I. ONE MUST BE "BORN AGAIN" TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

1. It is not a physical re-birth as Nicodemus thought but a newness given to one's heart and life.
 - There is the human birth which brings one into the physical world and there is the spiritual birth which brings one into the Kingdom of God, the spiritual world. (*John 3:3*)
 - Being born into the spiritual world, into God's Kingdom, gives one everlasting life. (*John 1:12-13*)
 - There are "moral" and spiritual changes that take place upon being born into God's Kingdom. (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)
2. Upon being brought into God's Kingdom, one is "adopted" by God into His Family which is called the "Church" or the "Christian" Family immediately.
 - Adoption occurs the moment one believes in Jesus Christ.
 - Being in God's Family, one's relationship with God is like that of a child with his/her Father.
 - God becomes the believer's (Christian's) Spiritual Father and therefore he/she is no longer separated as a stranger from God. (*Romans 8:14-16*)
 - Becoming a Child of God is possible only by Jesus Christ coming into this world and doing what He did. (*Galatians 4:4-7*)

II. GOD EXPECTS HIS CHILDREN TO GROW AND MATURE IN THEIR CHRISTIAN LIVES

1. The Christian life is very different from the normal human life and every Christian needs to have some form of assurance to encourage him/her to live his/her life as the Lord wants.
 - The Christian is eternally safe in the hand of Jesus Christ. (*John 10:28-30*)
 - Every Christian is immediately indwelt by the Holy Spirit upon his/her belief in Jesus Christ and will never leave, thus guaranteeing security in the Lord Jesus. (*Ephesians 1:13; 4:30*)
 - Christians can be sure that they are saved for all eternity.
 - There are visible signs that one is saved. (*1 John 3:14*)
 - There is the invisible, internal presence of the Holy Spirit. (*1 John 4:13*)
 - There is the record of what Jesus Christ has done, is doing and will do for those who would believe in Him. (*1 John 5:11-13*)

2. As any new born child must grow and mature humanly, so must Christians grow and mature spiritually, therefore learning to separate themselves from sin.
 - Christians are to deliberately separate themselves from all that is sinful. (*2 Corinthians 6:17-18*)
 - Christians are to learn to not love the things of the world. (*1 John 2:15*)
 - Christians are to change their way of living from the world's way to God's way and to learn to change their thinking patterns and ways. (*Romans 12:2*)
 - Christians are to be examples to the world and not to change to what the world is like.
 - Christians are to influence the world by what they do or don't do, by example.

3. The active Christian life produces growth in Grace.
 - Christians are expected to continue to grow in grace and in knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (*2 Peter 3:18*)
 - Christians are to become more like the Lord Jesus and to mature more and more in their faith.
 - (*Matthew 5:48*)
 - In order to continue to grow in the Lord Jesus, Christians must be willing to do whatever the Lord asks them to do, no matter what. (*Matthew 16:24*).

CONCLUSION:

1. Are YOU a Christian by the Lord's standards?
2. Are YOU continuing to grow and mature in grace and spiritual knowledge?
3. Are YOU doing what the Lord Jesus has asked you to do?
4. Where do YOU think you stand in regard to Christian growth?
5. Are YOU in the relationship with the Lord Jesus that HE wants you to be?
6. Do YOU need to make some changes? If so, then make them right now!