



BIBLE STUDY **Lost in a Sea** **of Confusing** **Claims about** **Christianity?**



The Bible
Answers Your
Hard Questions

JESUS IS OUR ONLY TRUTH AND HOPE!

This tract is provided to help all who struggle to understand God and His Word, the Bible. Perhaps you have investigated and become discouraged by so many claiming only “they hold the truth.” You may be pleased to learn that a few basic truths will help to identify those with unscriptural claims.

For instance, a church of Christ should teach:

- 1) Jesus began His human life through a virgin birth;
- 2) He led a sinless life;
- 3) His death redeems us from sin;
- 4) He was bodily resurrected;
- 5) He will return to claim us; and
- 6) He was both human and God in one.

Anyone denying these basic Bible truths should be carefully questioned. **What a religious group believes about Christ is all-important.** It is the real test of Truth. John cautioned, “*do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*” 1 John 4:1

A good method to continue your search for Truth is by prayer. A Roman regimental commander, and his family, “*were devout, feared God, and prayed to God regularly*” Acts 10:4. God heard his prayers and put him in contact with a man who could teach him the truth about Jesus. In like manner, God is able to examine your heart and bring someone to you who will reveal God's Truth. Perhaps that is happening at this very moment.

You should keep in mind that your search for truth is very personal and God expects you to weigh all explanations against His written Word. As you study, you will realize God expects you to take some action, both immediate and on a continuing basis.

Sometimes you may be discouraged as other Christians let you down. **Jesus will never let you down.** Hebrews 13:5. The confession of your belief that Jesus is the Son of God is a simple and yet profound matter. **Remarkably, the same confession cost Jesus His life.**

After many Bible studies with people just like you, the following questions are typical of those hindering some from becoming simply “a Christian.” It is our prayer these answers will help to motivate you to study the Bible for all Truth.

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SIN, SUFFERING AND DEATH?

When God made the world, he instructed Adam to work and subdue the earth. Genesis 1:28 & 2:15 Adam did his work with ease and joy in a perfect environment. When Adam sinned, God effected a radical change on man's working conditions. Burdens now reminded him of the results of sin. Someday, God will stop sin. When that happens, suffering and death will also cease for the faithful child of God.

These conditions disturbed the Christians in Rome 1900 years ago. Paul's advice was **“God causes *all things to work together for good TO THOSE WHO LOVE GOD.*”** Romans 8:28. That tells us that even the results of evil, sometimes, work in a Christian's favour.

Advertisers encourage us to buy their products to make life easier and eliminate toil and suffering. But suffering builds character and moulds personalities. Even though Jesus was the Son of God, He suffered abuse and death and as a result, **“He *learned obedience.*”** Hebrews 5:8. We should take comfort in knowing that when we suffer and are obedient to God and Jesus today, we will receive an eternal life free of suffering and death. Luke 16:25

WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD?

When you read the Bible, you immediately see it's high ideals and great moral values. If these are not God's values, then they are the imaginations of men. But the Bible says that **“*all men are sinners.*”** Romans 3:23 Therefore, if the Bible was created by sinners, it means evil men created high ideals and great moral values. That's a harder pill to swallow than acknowledging God as the author.

But it isn't necessary to speculate. The Bible speaks of its' own existence in 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21. As 40 men wrote the Bible, God inspired them. He spiritually infused His thoughts into their hearts and writing styles (Romans 5:5) so that His high ideals and great moral values could be used as a reliable guide. After all, if you are to be accountable for your success or failure to obey God, you must have access to the true standards of acceptable behaviour.

I AM AS GOOD AS ANY WHO CLAIM THEY ARE CHRISTIANS!

You may even be better. But goodness on our terms does not save a person. Remember, Paul said **“*all men are sinners*”** Romans 3:23. Acceptance of Jesus as your Saviour, and obedience to His will, is God's method of freeing you from your

sins to make you acceptable to Him. Romans 7:24. Jesus bought your freedom with His own blood. Acts 20:28. In effect, He tasted death for you and every man. Hebrews 2:9. Jesus died to save sinners. 1 Timothy 1:15.

Therefore, it is simply impossible to save yourself by your own goodness. Paul cautioned “when we compare ourselves with ourselves, we are without understanding.” 2 Corinthians 10:12.

THE WORLD IS EXTREMELY SELFISH AND CHRISTIANITY DOESN'T SEEM PRACTICAL.

In a sense that is true. The Christian life is based on self-denial. But the things of which you are encouraged to deny yourself are not essential to life. We learn to sacrifice for our families, our homes and our work. But God does not expect unreasonable sacrifices or impossible behaviour from His children.

Examine these differences in the Christian and non-Christian lifestyles:

The results of the Christian life are described as:

love, joy, truthfulness, kindness and peace. Galatians 5:22

The deeds of a non-Christian life are described as:

sorcery, immorality, idolatry, anger, drunkenness, jealousy and strife. Galatians 5:19

Honestly now, which life is the most practical? Someone has rightly said “salvation is more than a reformation of habits; it is a transformation of character.”

I WILL BECOME A CHRISTIAN WHEN I FEEL DIFFERENT.

Feeling different might be compared to being sick, perhaps near death. Would you wait until you felt better before seeing a doctor?” Is hunger satisfied before or after you eat? New Christians feel different after they are saved, not before.

Jesus gave fair warning that on the day of judgment, many will claim citizenship by feeling they had done many deeds in His name. Matthew 7:21.

But Isaiah cautioned “man’s ways and thoughts are not God’s ways and thoughts” Isaiah 55:8

True, you should feel different. But when one **hears the truth, repents of his sins, is baptized, and is added to God's church**, he should **ACT** differently. Being baptized, without an inner determination to change your life style is merely play acting. Peter said, “...*baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good (clean) conscience.*” 1 Peter 3:21.

The most religious people of his day came out to be baptized by John the Baptist. Seeing through their hypocrisy, John charged them to do deeds “***in keeping with their repentance.***” Matthew 3:7-8

DOES IT MATTER WHICH CHURCH I ATTEND? ISN'T ONE CHURCH JUST AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

Usually the person who asks that question is one who is uncommitted to Christianity. Sincere believers must take Christianity seriously. We all know people who select a wife or husband frivolously are usually unfaithful in that marriage. Christianity is a form of marriage. Jesus and the Apostles used a number of illustrations to show that the members of His church are His “***bride***” and He is the “***Bridegroom.***” Matthew 25:1. Jesus did not marry more than one bride (one church). Ephesians 4:4-5

The only way anyone can know for certain how God will judge everyone's intentions and actions is found in Jesus' own words: “***He who rejects me and receives not my sayings has One who judges him, FOR THE WORD I SPOKE WILL JUDGE HIM AT THE LAST DAY.***” John 12:48

Our only safe guide is His Word. If someone teaches that Jesus did not communicate His Word so that the poor and uneducated are able to understand it, be suspicious! Luke 4:18

DOESN'T EVERYONE HAVE A RIGHT TO HIS OWN BELIEF?

Absolutely! Every decision we make in life is optional. However, someone has observed “***if it doesn't matter what we believe, it probably doesn't matter whether we believe.***”

In 2 Kings 5:1-14, a great and honourable military man had leprosy. He was told how to be healed.

Naaman wasn't satisfied with the simple instructions given him. He argued that God's remedy seemed inadequate and that a more difficult solution was more logical. When it was explained that God's ways are not man's ways, Naaman submitted to God's will and was healed.

In sharp contrast, in 2 Sam 6, a young man was transporting the Ark of God when the oxen stumbled. Being forewarned by the Lord not to touch the ark, Uzzah reached out to keep it from falling and was immediately struck dead. Uzzah's good intentions were unacceptable because they reflected a form of profanity for God's

specific instructions.

For several years after the church was established, Paul thought he had the right to destroy Christianity. Acts 26:9 Jesus convinced Paul his zeal was misdirected and a drastic change was necessary. Acts 9:1-30 Later, Paul said his former religious practices were done in all good conscience. Acts 23:1

All of these people had a right to their beliefs. But **rights carry responsibilities**. No one is ever forced to serve God. Adam and Eve had to live and die with their decisions.

When it comes to exercising our rights to our own beliefs, we too must live or die with our choices. May the Lord God help us to choose wisely.

TODAY'S LIFESTYLES DIFFER GREATLY FROM WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES; THINGS LIKE: OPEN MARRIAGES; HOMOSEXUALITY, STEALING, LYING, SPIRITUALISTS, AND DRUNKENNESS.

AM I TO CHANGE ALL MY LIFESTYLES?

Every society/culture has some peculiar lifestyles which run contrary to a healthy spirit filled life. Sin is like that. It holds out the lustre of a fun filled life without regard to consequences.

For instance, those who engage in homosexual behaviour prefer to continue even when they learn that God disapproves. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:9-10. To justify themselves, they argue their lifestyles are inherited and therefore God must approve. Thus, their views of the Bible portray God as a monster: first to bring certain persons into the world with abnormal passions beyond their control; and then to condemn them for their actions. The truth is the Bible does not teach that these lifestyles are inherited, but rather are learned by:

“exchanging the truth of God for a lie.” Romans 1:21-28.

In some cultures, people practice forms of “magic” or “communication with the dead” to see into the future. Both Moses and Paul wrote to do so **“provokes the Lord God to jealousy.”** Deuteronomy 18:9-12, 32:20-21, 1 Corinthians 10:20-21.

Sometimes we inadvertently sin. A driver may lose control of a vehicle and kill an innocent party. In contrast, some may procrastinate and lose their own souls by failing to respond to God's will while time allows.

When we learn what God in His Word has declared as sinful, we are expected to make changes in our lifestyles. We may change and slip back into our old ways. Every person experiences regression in their growth process. The faithful

Christian keeps trying until his life is perfected (matured) for Christ. An untimely death may cause us to fall short of our goal, but God expects us to keep trying as long as life is within us and He will accept the results by His Grace. Hebrews 10:34-39, Titus 3:5-7.

HOW CAN I COPE WITH NEIGHBOURS & RELATIVES MAKING FUN OF ME FOR TRYING TO LIVE THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

There's probably not a Christian alive who cannot tell you of some abuse they have suffered **“because they decided to obey Jesus.”** You should not fool yourself that the Christian life will be simple. Jesus said, He did not come to bring peace, **“but a sword to divide a faithful follower from family members and friends.”** Matthew 10:34

The stress of becoming a Christian is made easier with the knowledge that **“God will not allow you to suffer or be tempted more than you are able to bear.”** 1 Corinthians 10:13 Jesus expects the faithful Christian to try and do good works on a daily basis. Luke 9:23 If you do, your life and personality will be gradually changed and brought closer to God. The person who will not work for the Lord, is not worthy to have Him as their Lord. Matthew 10:38

If you concentrate on being a faithful Christian, your friends and neighbours will see the change in your life and want to know more about it. If they see no change and think you are no better or worse than they are, they will see that also, and ridicule you for it.

Worship with a Church of Christ near you.

Church of Christ

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Worship: Sunday 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Bible Class: Friday 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm