

# Discipleship Lesson #1

The Key to living a victorious, Spirit-filled Christian life is Jesus Christ as the Center and Lord of all we do. With Christ in control, life is balanced and effective. The Wheel illustrates this Christ-centered life (See Page 12).

Usually "either/or" thinking is not reliable. Usually life is "both/and." It is not either fellowship or witnessing; it is not either prayer or an intake of the Word. A balanced Christian life should be all of these. This balance should be the desire of every Christian.

Christ the Center	Galatians 2:20; John 15:5; Colossians 1:27
Obedience to Christ	John 14:21; Romans 12:1,2; Luke 6:46
The Word	1 Peter 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; Joshua 1:8
Prayer	Matthew 7:7; Philippians 4:6,7; John 15:7
Fellowship	Matthew 18:20; Hebrews 10:24,25; 1 John 1:3
Witnessing	Matthew 4:19; Romans 1:16; 1 Peter 3:15

## How to be sure you are a Christian

Christ is the Center - Galatians 2:20; John 15:5; Colossians 1:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17

The act of making Christ central in your life, that is, giving Him the place of true lordship in your life, is really an act of your will. There should be a daily surrender totally to Christ's authority and lordship.

It is true that lordship is a voluntary matter, that is, a matter of your choice or your will. But as you pray and as others pray for you, God creates within you the desire to do what He wants you to do in order to express His lordship in your life.

# 1. Intellectual Commitment

Let us examine more clearly, one by one, each of the three elements of Christian commitment, Christianity is not "a blind leap of faith." It is built upon historical fact, documented by centuries of scholarship and research. Many leading scholars have dedicated their lives to investigating the life, teachings, death, resurrection and influence of Jesus of Nazareth. As a result, we have more historical evidence proving His resurrection than we have on the fact that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo.

## a. Who is Jesus Christ?

1. State in your own words what you think Jesus meant when He made the following claims:
  - a. [John 10:30-33](#)
  
  - b. [John 14:8,9](#)
  
2. State in your own words what others thought of Jesus Christ:
  - a. The Apostle John ([John 1:1-14](#))
  
  - b. Thomas ([John 20:25-28](#))
  
  - c. His enemies ([John 5:18](#))

### 3. Who do you say Jesus Christ is and why?

Jesus of Nazareth was conceived by the Holy Spirit and was born of the Virgin Mary almost 2,000 years ago. Hundreds of years before, the great prophets of Israel had foretold His coming. The Old Testament, which was written by many individuals over a period of 1,500 years, contains more than 300 references to His coming. (See: The study on The Bible's Authenticity)

At the age of 30, Jesus began His public ministry. In the three years that followed, He gave man the formula for a full and abundant life and for the life to come.

The life Jesus led, the miracles He performed, the words He spoke, His death on the cross, His resurrection, His ascent to heaven - all point to the fact that He was not mere man, but more than man. Mohammed was merely a prophet; Buddha from his own admissions, was an agnostic; Confucius was an ethical teacher - but Jesus claimed to be God. He asserted His deity when He said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). (See: Great Prophets Study)

#### **b. Why did Jesus Christ come?**

1. Why was it necessary for Jesus Christ to come?  
(Romans 3:23)
2. Why did Jesus die for us?  
(1 Peter 3:18)
3. What has Jesus Christ done for our sins that no one else can do?  
(1 Peter 2:24,25)

4. What is the significance to us of the resurrection of Christ from the dead?  
(1 Peter 1:3)

In the Old Testament, the Israelites periodically brought animals to the priest to be sacrificed. The priest then slew the animal and sprinkled its blood on the altar as a temporary covering for the sins of the individual making the sacrifice. These animals had to be perfect, without spot or blemish, in order for the sin of the one making the sacrifice to be transferred to the innocent offering. This was the picture of the coming of God's one special Lamb, the One whose blood would not just cover man's sins temporarily, but would wash them away forever.

"Without the shedding of blood", we are told in the Scriptures, "there is no forgiveness of sins" ([Hebrews 9:22](#)). That is why God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, who was without spot or blemish, to shed His blood upon the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

In order to become a Christian, then, you must honestly and squarely face the claims of Jesus Christ and believe intellectually that He is God, that He died for your sins and was buried, that He rose again, and that He wants to come into your life and be your Savior and Lord.

## 2. Emotional Commitment

An emotion is a feeling or a reaction to a specific act, event or experience. The failure to distinguish between different types of emotions has caused many people to be confused in their relationship with God.

### a. When it comes to emotions, people respond differently

1. What was the Apostle Paul's experience in coming to know God? ([Acts 22:6-10](#))
  
2. What was Timothy's experience in coming to know God? ([2 Timothy 1:5](#))

Emotions are a normal part of our life since we are emotional creatures by nature. Different personalities respond to God differently emotionally. One person may have a highly emotional personality, while another may be calm and reserved. *Because emotions vary greatly, they are not to be depended upon.* Depending upon emotions, or seeking an emotional experience, has caused many to lack the assurance of a vital personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

The Bible says, "The just shall live by faith," and "...without faith it is impossible to please Him." "Whatever is not from faith," it continues, "is sin."

The very act of seeking an emotional experience, therefore, contradicts the very thing that pleases God. Faith is another word for trust, and *our faith must be placed in the person of God and in His holy, inspired Word, rather than in our feelings.*

**b. Do not depend on feelings: Emotions can deceive**

Assurance is based on the authority of God's Word. When you meet God's conditions, as revealed in His Word, you can be assured that you are a child of God. The Christian lives by faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the results of our experiences).

***FACT-----FAITH-----FEELING***

1. FACT: The facts about the Christian life are in the Bible.  
Does a fact change?
  
2. FEELINGS:
  - a. Do our feelings change?
  
  - b. What determines whether our feelings are up or down?
  
3. FAITH:
  - a. If we put our faith in our feelings and our feelings are determined by circumstances, what will our faith do?
  
  - b. If we put our faith in facts (and a fact is true and does not change), what will our faith be like?

**c. Threefold Confirmation**

God gives us a threefold confirmation that Jesus Christ is in our lives.

- Trustworthy Word

- Confirming Holy Spirit = Assurance
- Changed life

First we have the external witness, or evidence, of the Word of God. Assurance is based on the authority of God's Word. When you meet God's conditions, as revealed in His Word, you can be assured that you are a child of God. Read [1 John 5:9-13](#).

Second, there is the internal witness or evidence, of the Holy Spirit. Paul writes in [Romans 8:16](#), "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God." Read: [1 Thessalonians 1:5](#).

Our changed lives are a third witness to the fact we are Christians. Jesus explained to Nicodemus, a devout religious leader of the Jews, "...unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Read [Colossians 1:6](#). The proof that we have experienced a new birth and have become children of God will be demonstrated by our changed lives. Read [1 John 2:3-6](#).

### 3. Voluntary Commitment

In addition to the intellect and the emotions, becoming a Christian (See [John 1:13](#)) and being sure that you are a Christian involves the will.

Christ emphasized the importance of man's will in relation to the assurance of salvation. He said, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." ([John 7:17](#))

According to these words of Christ, unless you are willing to obey the truth, you will never know the truth; unless you are willing to walk in the light, you will never see the light.

#### a. Facts to put your faith in

1. Your sins were forgiven Read [Colossians 1:12-14](#)
  - a. How many of your sins were forgiven?
  - b. If God has forgiven you, why are there times when you are haunted by guilt feelings? ([1 John 1:8,9](#))
  - c. What can be done about unconfessed sin? ([1 John 1:9](#))

Why not pause now and claim God's promise of forgiveness in [1 John 1:9](#) for any sins that you are aware of in your life. (Note: The subject of how to deal with sin in your life will be covered in another lesson.)

2. You became a child of God. Read [John 1:12,13](#).
  - a. What people are spiritually born into God's family?

b. When you received Christ what did you become?

3. You received eternal life. Read **1 John 5:11-13**.

a. According to this passage, where is eternal life to be found?

b. If a person has Christ in his life, what else does he have?

c. **1 John 5:13** states, "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may (hope that, feel like, guess that, work toward or know that) you have eternal life." Mark out the incorrect words.

d. Do you know that you have eternal life?

1. On what basis?

e. If you have eternal life now, would it be possible for you not to have eternal life tomorrow? (**Hebrews 13:5**)

**b. Deciding on the basis of the facts**

1. Is salvation something you earned? (**Ephesians 2:8,9**)

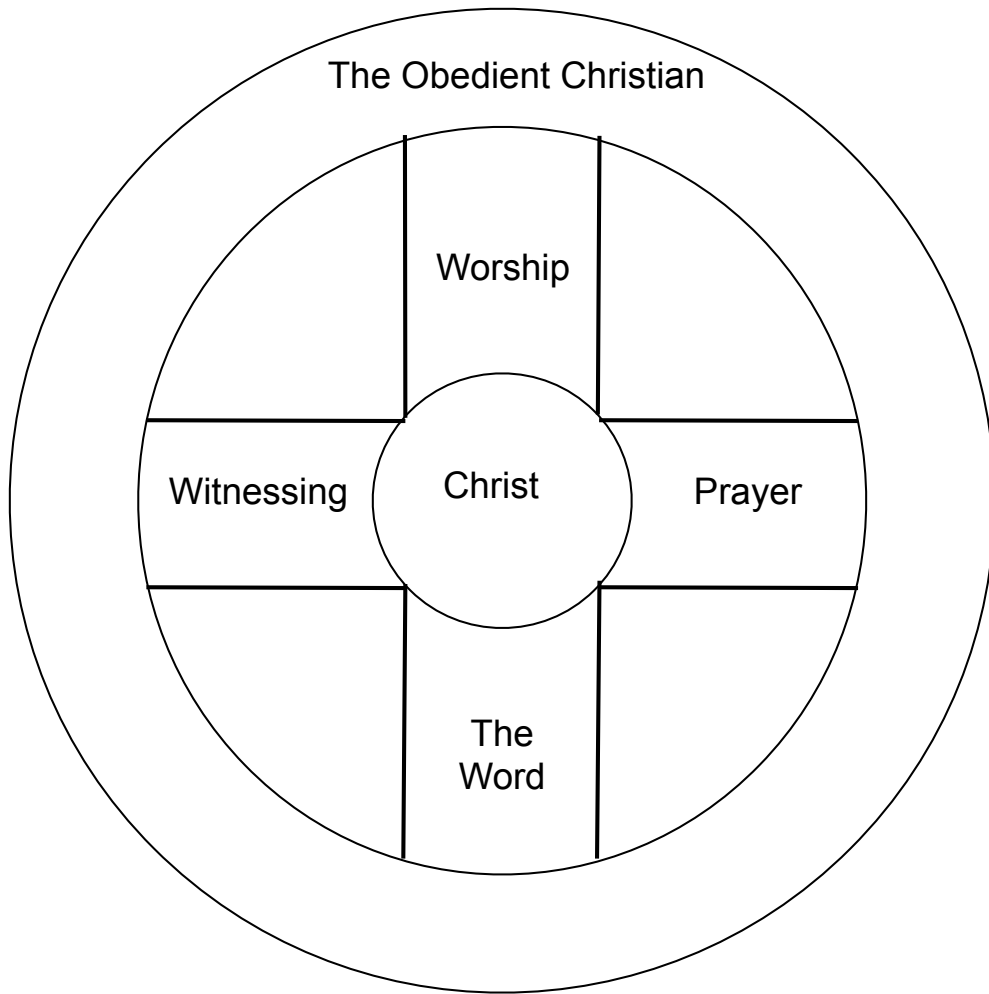
a. On what basis did you obtain it?

b. How do good works relate to your salvation?

2. Do you have the assurance that Christ is in your life? Are you sure that if you died right now, you would spend eternity with God in heaven?

## **Thought Questions**

1. A simple head knowledge of the facts of the Gospel is not enough for salvation. However, these facts must be believed intellectually. What are the facts?
2. How might one's emotions cause him to doubt that he has a relationship with God?
3. What is the threefold confirmation God gives us that Jesus Christ is in our lives?



Notes:

## Scripture (NIV)

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

John 14:21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

Romans 12:1,2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Luke 6:46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

2 Tim. 3:16,17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,  
2 Timothy 3:17: so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Joshua 1:8 Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Matthew 7:7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

Philippians 4:6,7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Matthew 18:20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

Hebrews 10:24,25 And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Matthew 4:19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

John 15:5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

John 10:30-33 I and the Father are one."

John 10:31: Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him,

John 10:32: but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

John 10:33: "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."

John 14:8,9 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 1: 1-14 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

John 14:9: Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 20:25-28 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

John 5:18 For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,

1 Peter 2:24,25 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

1 Peter 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Hebrews 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Acts 22:6-10 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' "Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. "'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

2 Timothy 1:5 I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

1 John 5:9-13 We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son.

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Romans 8:16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

1 Thessalonians 1:5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

1 John 2:3-6 We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

John 1:13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John 7:17 If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

Colossians 1:12-14 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1 John 1:8,9 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

John 1:12,13 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- children born not of

natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

1 John 5:11-13 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

Ephesians 2:8,9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.