

CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE POSTAL COURSE

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LESSON 22 • Walking in Newness of LifeWEEKLY READINGS
READING FOR STUDY PAPERPsalm 119, Philemon
Hebrews 12

When we are baptised, we are born again. To Nicodemus, who came to Him by night, Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John, chapter 3, verse 3).

Jesus goes on to explain that He is thinking, not of a natural birth, but a birth of the Spirit. He says in John, chapter 3, verse 6, "That which is born of the flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

When a baby is born, a new life begins. And so, when we are baptised, we begin a new life - a life "in Christ".

The apostle Paul tells us in II Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 17, "...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

If we are to grow up in Christ Jesus, we have to do our part, striving continually. If we don't strive, that "old man" which we renounced when we were baptised will get the better of us.

Help in the way

If we had to struggle alone, we could never "grow up" in Christ. But God has given us all we need for our spiritual growth. He has given us the great privilege of coming to Him in prayer, through the Lord Jesus. All our difficulties, our joys and our sorrows, we may confide in Him, coming to Him reverently, and asking Him to help us and hear us for Jesus' sake.

He has given us His Word, the Bible. We could have no better guide; it will teach us more about God's ways; it will help us to act as He would have us do, and to grow up into that "new man" in Christ. We read in II Timothy, chapter 3, verses 16-17 that, "All scripture...is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

He has given us the ability to think about His Word and His ways. It is written in the book of Proverbs, chapter 23, verse 7, "...as he (him that hath an evil eye - verse 6) thinketh in his heart, so is he."

If we let our minds dwell more and more on the things of God, we shall gradually become better men and women.

Believing and doing

Reading and praying and meditating will help us to do the right things. Someone once asked Jesus, "...Which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matthew, chapter 22, verse 36).

We read the reply of Jesus in verses 37-39, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

These commandments are not easy to keep. We shall only be able to love God with all our heart and soul and mind if we keep reminding ourselves how much God has loved us, and how much He has done for us.

He has done great things for us. How can we pay the great debt we owe Him? We can do nothing for Him.

But what does Jesus give us as the second commandment? "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here is something we can do. We can help other people, and show them thoughtfulness and love, as God has shown love to us.

The greatest thing we can do for others is to pass on to them the good news of the Kingdom of God, which we ourselves have come to believe. As God has invited us to keep His ways, and to share in the joys of His Kingdom, so we must invite others to share the joy we have found.

Jesus once said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew, chapter 7, verse 12).

God will accept the acts of love which we show our fellow men as if they were done to Him. So there is something we can do to show our appreciation of His love to us.

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The disciple and the world

There are many things in the world today which are ungodly. There are, for instance, many books, papers, pictures, which quickly turn our minds to things that are evil and impure; and sometimes these things appeal to us very much. But - however much they appeal to us - we just have to turn away from them; if we don't, they will turn us away from God.

Taking no part in the ungodly pleasures of the world will mean losing some of our friends - for they won't understand why we now refuse to do things which we once enjoyed.

But we shall find many new friends; for all who - like us - have separated themselves from the world, will be united together. They will be children of God, and brothers and sisters in Christ.

Remembering Jesus

Baptism gives us a fresh start. We set out, when we are baptised, on the strait and narrow way that leads to God's Kingdom. But we are still very human, and we soon forget how much Jesus did for us when He died on the cross. Jesus knew how easily His disciples would forget: so He told them to do something to remind them. Turn to the gospel of Luke, chapter 22, and read verses 14-20. This is the story of what is usually called the "Last Supper", because it is the last meal that Jesus shared with His disciples before His death.

See how the bread and the wine were to remind His disciples how Jesus gave His life for them. He said to them, "...this do in remembrance of Me". Now read I Corinthians, chapter 11, verses 23-28. The early Christians met on the first day of each week to remember Jesus in the way in which He had commanded them.

True disciples of the Lord Jesus will meet together, as the first disciples did (and usually Sunday is the most convenient day for such meetings), to break bread and to drink wine, remembering how Jesus' body was broken and His blood was shed for them.

As we grow up in Christ, remembering Jesus in this way will become more and more important to us, helping us to realise that He is with us all the time.

You must decide

And so, as you finish reading these papers, you will be like one who stands at the foot of a signpost. One way, you know, leads to death. The other is the way of life. Along the way of life travel those who have believed the Word of God, and been baptised into Christ. Jesus Himself is with them as they travel. Will you join them, too? Will you believe the glorious message of the Word of God? Will you be baptised into Christ? Remember that Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved" (Mark, chapter 16, verse 16).

Summary

1. Every day we must try to read something from the Bible, and say our prayer.
2. After we have been baptised, we must try to meet with our fellow believers every week, to break and drink wine in memory of Jesus. (Of course, this may not always be possible, because there may not be people with the same beliefs in our part of the world).
3. We must try to give up all things likely to make us sin.
4. We must try continually to do good to other people.