**What Does It Mean to Become a Christian?**

The title of this article does not refer to how one becomes a Christian. We can talk about being redeemed by the blood of Christ through the acts of obedience given in the Bible. Often, we start with a non-Christian at the point of believing Jesus is the Son of God, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” (John 8:24) Then we build upon that with the need for repentance. “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.” (Acts 17:30) One must turn from sin toward God. There is the need to confess Jesus as the Son of God.

A man from Ethiopia made such a confession when learning about Jesus. “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts 8:35-37) As seen in the above passage, one must be baptized. The act of baptism was mentioned by Jesus in Mark 16.16; Matthew 28.18-20. Peter told the audience on the day od Pentecost to repent and be baptized. “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38) Many a sermon ends with what is often called the “Steps of Salvation” which means, hearing the Gospel, Believing, Repenting, Confessing Christ, and being baptized for the remission of sins.

But what comes afterward? It has been observed that many who have followed those “Steps of Salvation” eventually fall away. Our admonition in the Bible is to be “faithful till death” Revelation 2.10. I haven’t seen any statistics but some have spoken of over half those who put on Christ eventually go back into the world. Notice baptism is just the beginning of being a Christian, not the end. Also, one can be lost after becoming a child of God. Many will argue this point but the Bible plainly warnings us of the danger of being separated from Christ. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.” (Hebrews 6:4-6) Those “once enlightened” are those who had obeyed the Gospel of Christ. They became “partakers of the Holy Spirit” and “tasted the word of God” finally, they were in danger of falling away.

Again, I want to state, being baptized into Christ is the beginning and not the end of living the Christian life. Far too many babes in Christ have come out of the water at baptism and then left by themselves to figure out what comes next. Therefore, the rest of this article and what follows will be devoted to “What does it mean to become a Christian?” Along with related questions such as “Why am I not growing?

When one enters a new relationship, they are making a commitment to that relationship. A couple getting married are making a commitment before God and to each other. While they may not truly understand what all of those changes mean, they do know for this relationship to endure they must be committed to each other. Marriages fail when people forsake their vows and go back to mom or dad or to living the single life. When one is baptized into Christ, they are entering this new relationship which means they must yield to Him and be unspotted from the world. “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:30-32)

Commitment is a long-term action. One is not committed if they quit after one day or when they feel like it. It means growing on a regular basis. When speaking of being a Christian the word Lord comes to mind, “But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:8-9) Jesus as “Lord” means you follow Him and submit to His will. We are to be living sacrifices in His service. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2)

Therefore, my first thought of what it means to become a Christian is to be committed to serving Him. Without such commitment you will fail. – Dennis Tucker