

WHY BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11:26.

The name "Christian" was given to the believers in Antioch by the heathen in that city as a nickname or a term of reproach and derision. It was a term of contempt which was applied by the pagans to the young converts to the Christian faith. To say the least, it was very appropriate. The fact that these pagans named the believers after Christ proves that they recognized and acknowledged their devotion to Christ. It was an acknowledgment of their Christlikeness. This title was given to them by the heathen in testimony to their devotion to Christ and His commands.

The church members in Antioch deserved to be called Christians because they put in practice the spirit of Christ. Their speech was seasoned with grace, their conduct was exemplary, and their joy in the Lord was abounding. They were called Christians because their lives differed from those who were not. Since then each follower of Christ in every clime has been called Christian.

How many there are who would like to be called "Christian," who do call themselves by this name, but whom the name does not fit at all! A Christian is a person who belongs to Christ. The greatest, grandest and most blessed thing in all the world is to be a Christian. What a wonderful world this would be if everyone accepted the Lord Jesus as Saviour, crowned Him as Lord and learned from Him as Teacher!

What are some of the reasons why everyone should become a Christian?

I. It Is Right.

According to God, there is a principle of right and wrong. Some things are right and others are wrong. No one ever gained by doing wrong. No man ever lost by doing right. If a person will do the right thing, God will be with him. On the other hand, if he chooses to do wrong, then God will not be with him.

It is right to become a Christian. It is wrong not to become a Christian. This fact needs to be emphasized repeatedly and to everybody.

It is right to self to become a Christian. He who does not become a Christian commits soul suicide. If a man takes his own life, he commits suicide. He thereby sins against himself. Suicide is never justified. If a man rejects Jesus Christ and goes to hell, he commits soul suicide. This is a terrible sin, which no man can ever justify. Moreover, soul suicide is a sin which nobody needs to commit.

Becoming a Christian is right with reference to others. Every man owes it to his fellow-men to become a Christian. Everybody influences somebody. You are the ideal of somebody. One example is worth much advice. Others will follow in your footsteps more easily and readily than they will follow your advice. One example is worth more than thousands of arguments. Everybody is an example for somebody, whether or not he intends to be. A person can be a blot or a blessing, but he cannot be a blank.

Every unsaved person has an influence. It is unethical for any person to live in a lost condition. He always injures some other person. If a father is not a Christian, he cannot influence his boy as he should. If a mother is not a Christian, she cannot influence her daughter so as to lead her to have faith in Christ. If there were no other reason than proper example and influence, this is reason enough for any unsaved person to become a Christian.

Years ago, Dr. George W. Truett, the great and famous pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas, was conducting a revival in one of our large cities. Night after night two

young men came to the services - and sat near the front. However, for some reason they made no move to accept. Christ. They were very intelligent looking, and always listened very attentively. Dr. Truett became greatly interested in them as the revival progressed. After the services one night, he asked the pastor who they were. The pastor told him they were two of the most gifted young lawyers in the city. They were clean, moral, ethical, and respected young men. However, they made no profession of faith, and were not members of any church.

The next night, following the invitation, Dr. Truett went to the young men and introduced himself.

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Truett, "I want to ask you a question."

"What is your question?" one of them replied.

"I would just like to know why two fine looking young men like you have never become Christians?"

"Well, sir, you will probably think us very foolish when we tell you why," answered the other young man.

"Go ahead, I would like to know," replied Dr. Truett.

"You see, it is like this, Doctor: We were in the same class all through law school. When we graduated, we decided to team up and go into partnership. We decided, also, to be clean, moral, and ethical in all our dealings. We wanted a model after whom we could pattern our lives and law practice. We chose Judge So and So. He has always been a man above reproach, and one of the most respected lawyers in this state. We understand that he has never made a profession as being a Christian, and is not a member of any church. We are not dis-believers. We are just abiding by our decision to model our lives after the Judge."

"Thank you, young gentlemen, for your very frank answer."

The next day, Dr. Truett walked down town, into the chambers of this prominent judge, and introduced himself.

"Judge, I have come down here today to ask you a question on ethics."

"Go ahead."

"Your Honor, is it right for a man to live in such a way as to influence his fellowman to make the wrong decision for life and eternity?"

"Why, certainly not," replied the judge.

Dr. Truett, then, told him about the two young lawyers and his conversation with them.

The judge walked over to the window, gripped his hands behind his back, and looked out over the city in deep contemplation for several minutes. Slowly the judge turned back to Dr. Truett and said, "I will be in your service tonight, Doctor."

As Dr. Truett sat on the platform that night, looking out upon the gathering crowd, he saw the prominent judge come in and take his seat near the front. A few moments later, the two young lawyers came in and sat in the seat directly behind the judge.

Dr. Truett said he preached on "Influence" that night — and preached to one man in

particular. When he had finished his sermon, he gave the invitation. On the very first verse, the distinguished judge stepped out from his seat and came forward.

"Doctor, I want to here and now commit my life to Christ and become a Christian," said the judge.

"I am so glad you have come, sir," answered Dr. Truett.

Immediately, the two young lawyers followed the judge. They, too, said they wanted to become Christians.

Yes, it is unethical for anyone to live out of Christ. You owe it to someone else to take your stand for Him.

Any person who does not become a Christian is an ingrate to the grace of God. How thankless the man who does not have any gratitude in his heart for what Jesus Christ has done for him! Some people will not even say "thank you" when you do them a favor.

An evangelist related the following story:

"Sometime ago I was in another state in a revival meeting. About mid-week I ran out of toothpaste. So I walked down the street, from the motel where I was staying, to a sundry store, to buy some. As I started in the door, I met a woman coming out. Now, I always try to be a gentleman wherever I am. So I opened the door, stepped back, and held it open for her. You know what that frizzly-headed blonde did? She stuck her nose in the air, held her cigarette between her fingers, waltzed out, and did not even say "thank you, kiss my foot," or anything. I stood there rather chagrined for a second or two, then called out after her in alloud voice, "YOU'RE WELCOME." She paused not, but merrily went on her way, pretending to hear nothing.

Jesus Christ has opened wide the door of salvation but many have been ungrateful for the fact that He has done so, and have remained outside. Christ died on the cross for you and, if there were any gratitude in your heart, you would accept Him as your Saviour and live for Him.

II. It Is Safe.

The only safe thing for a person to do is to become a Christian. After he does so, he does not have to take any chances regarding the safety of his soul or spending eternity in hell. It is safe to become a Christian.

With God it is always today, but the foolish person wants to wait until tomorrow, or some other time. We do not hold any lease on life. Your heart beats, and then gets permission from God to beat again. Each of us is just one heart beat from eternity.

The brevity and uncertainty of human life demand that a person settle the question of the salvation of his soul, and settle it now. Instead of listening to the lies of Satan, such as, "You have plenty of time," or "Tomorrow will be a better time," you should remember that God said: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

III. It Is Profitable.

Many are daily drifting along in their Christ-ignoring way, without thinking of what is involved in their living without Him. They end up with blighted lives, broken hearts, and blasted hopes.

When one becomes a Christian he receives pardon or the forgiveness of his sins. Another wonderful blessing which one receives upon becoming a Christian is peace. What is peace? Who has peace? Only a Christian knows real peace - the peace that God gives. Do you have this peace? Paul said, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). One who is not a Christian does not have peace, and honesty compels him to admit that he does not have peace. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Another wonderful benefit that accrues from becoming a Christian is security. A Christian has the blessed assurance that his sins are forgiven, that Jesus Christ is his Saviour, and that when he dies he shall go to heaven.

Joy is also one of the benefits derived from becoming a Christian. Only a Christian knows what it means to have the joy about which the Apostle Peter wrote in I Peter 1:8: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

It is wonderful to be a Christian. If you are not a Christian, you should become one now by repenting of your sins and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ because it is right, it is safe, and it is profitable.