

DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON ONE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST? WE BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD

INTRODUCTION: No doubt, most of us know Christians who live as though the only advantage to having received Christ as Savior is that they will no longer spend eternity in Hell. This contradicts what the scriptures teach because the Bible clearly says that a number of events take place when a person asks Jesus to come into their heart.

Today we want to focus on three things that take place in the precise moment that one accepts Jesus. In that very instant, one's life is completely changed, because he is born of the Spirit of God, he ceases to belong to the "world", and is made a citizen of Heaven.

I. BORN OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD

According to JOHN 1:12-13, those who receive Christ as Savior become re-born as "children of God". They are not born physically (of blood), by self desire (the will of the flesh), or by the desire of another person (the will of man). They are born of God! The moment a person asks Jesus to forgive him and come into his life and be his Savior, God (by His own will), adopts him into His family by way of *spiritual birth*. God's Spirit comes into our human spirit and gives us spiritual life.

In JOHN 3:1-7, a man who was considered very religious by the Jews did not know of this truth. Jesus explained to him that if he wanted to see the Kingdom of God, he would have to be "born again." Jesus told him not to confuse spiritual birth with the physical birth. He explained to Nicodemus that one must first be born physically (of water in the womb), and then spiritually (of the Spirit of God). This birth had to take place before he could enter the Kingdom of God. Then Jesus went on to tell him that this spiritual birth would take place if Nicodemus "believed on" Him (John 3:16).

This birth is not something that takes place in the future. It occurs the minute one believes in Jesus with all his heart. 1 JOHN 3:1-2 tells us that God calls us "His children". Surely no one would object to being able to call God "*Father*". But for God to want to call us "His children"; this is truly an honor and something to be very thankful for. We are not His children simply because we call ourselves His children, but because *He* says we are His children.

This is something the unbelieving world will not understand. The world did not understand Jesus as God in the flesh. Satan, who is the god of this world, has its occupants blinded. Therefore, we should not be offended when the world makes fun of us.

Because "NOW WE ARE CHILDREN OF GOD", it would be wise for us to find out what our obligations

and responsibilities are. We find this out by going to God's WORD, *The Bible*. The Holy Spirit who lives inside of us (remember He came into our human spirit when we received Christ), will lead us as we study the Word. We will dig deeper into this subject in another lesson.

We are now children of God, but this does not mean we have become perfect. We still have much spiritual growing to do. As long as we live in the world, it remains our responsibility to grow spiritually every day. As we are growing, we will be led by the Spirit to help others in their spiritual growth. One day, our Lord Jesus will come back for us, and we will see Him exactly as He is. That day we will be transformed in a twinkling of an eye, and will be just like Him. Until then, we must always be spiritually growing.

II. WE DO NOT BELONG TO THE WORLD ANY MORE

Suppose you were planning to move to another place. It would be foolish to invest all that you had in the place you were moving away from. It would be better to pour all of your investments into the new place, because that is where your future lies.

As children of God, our interests and motivation are going to be different from what they were before we were born again. The world and the pleasure we received from it was most important to us. *Now*, however, we should be interested in the Kingdom of our Lord. The following truths show why these new interests in spiritual matters have become alive to us:

1 JOHN 2:17 teaches us that material things will soon cease to exist. The world and its fleshly desires will pass away. We realize that the only things that are eternal are those we do for God.

1 JOHN 2:15-16 says that everything that belongs to the world does not come from God. Therefore, to love the things of this world, is to push God aside. Our task is to free others from the world and bring them to God for salvation.

JAMES 4:4 says that we cannot walk down two different roads. To be friends with the world is to be God's enemy.

MATTHEW 6:19-20 shows that the accumulation of treasures here on earth is a lost cause. Thieves might steal from us. And if they do not, our treasures will soon turn to dust. It is wiser to accumulate treasures in heaven where there are no thieves and where things are everlasting.

PHILIPPIANS 3:20-21 Before we became children of

InGod, we felt "at ease" with the world. But now that has changed. We no longer belong to the world. It is now our battle field where we fight for the salvation of souls and the honor and glory of our God. Our desire is to fight with all our might and destroy Satan and His army of fallen angels who desire to destroy mankind and all of God's creation.

Jesus teaches us in JOHN 15:18-20 that the world is not going to like us, because we no longer are a part of or belong to it. But the world did not like Jesus either. Our Lord came to the world to save us from Satan and eternal separation from God. He gave His life to save sinners. He has placed His army (the Church), in the world to carry out the task of enlarging His kingdom by preaching the gospel to every man, woman, boy, and girl. The world does not understand this. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 tells us that the "natural man" (the person who has not received Christ), cannot understand spiritual matters because they seem foolish to him.

Even though we do not belong to the world, we still live in the world. This will only be for a short while, however, because someday our Lord will return to take us home. For this reason and until then, we must fight against Satan with all our might.

III. HEAVEN IS OUR HOME

It would be a horrible thing if you were required to spend the next five years as someone's slave. But if after the end of that five years you were to receive a million dollars, you might not consider it such a bad thing. You might not even think of it as slavery. Likewise, our task here on earth should seem relatively easy when we consider what is waiting for us in heaven.

ROMANS 8:16-18 tells us that as children of God, we are His heirs. In other words, everything that belongs to Him is ours! It also tells us that, even as our Lord Jesus suffered, we will also have to go through some of the trials and tribulations that this world will throw our way. Why? Because the spiritual battle we are involved in is not over yet. But the thought of Heaven and all it holds for us makes the things we must put up with here on earth seem small and insignificant.

Knowing that we are God's heirs, and that everything that is His is ours, we might wonder why it is necessary to spend so much time here on earth going through hardships and persecution. It is true that we should look forward to spending eternity with Jesus in Heaven. But there are two important reasons why we should also look forward to serving our time here on earth.

First, this is the only place where we have the opportunity to show God how much we truly love Him and where we thank Him for all He has done for us. Once we are in heaven, all will be perfect. No sin or anything which can detour us from God will be permitted there. We will be like Jesus, perfect in every sense of the word. Here on earth is the only place we can truly show God how much we love Him.

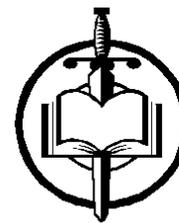
And it is our *faith* (Hebrews 11:6) that pleases God. Exercising faith is one way that we show Him that we love Him.

Second, it is here on earth where we build up treasures in heaven. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9-15 paints us a picture of Christians, both lazy and hard working. The day will come when the works of both will pass through fire to be tested. The bad works of lazy Christians will be burned up. The good works of hard working Christians will be rewarded. The lazy Christians will be saved, yet will have no reward or "treasure."

The idea of serving the Lord for the purpose of receiving rewards might sound selfish. We should be willing to work for Him just because He did so much for us. But when we receive those rewards, we will have the opportunity to lay them at Jesus' feet in appreciation for all He has done for us. There will be those who have many rewards to give back to Him, but there will also be those who have no rewards.

Before returning to heaven, Jesus told us of a beautiful place He was going to prepare for us. In JOHN 14:2-3 our Master said that He would come to take us with Him. In REVELATION 21:9-22, the apostle John describes our new home. After considering it, and all the marvelous things that await us, whatever temporary treasure the world has to offer suddenly loses its appeal.

CONCLUSION: As children of God, we must accept these truths by faith just as we accepted Jesus by faith. We must live our lives, while here on earth in obedience to our Lord, showing our loyalty to Him. While we have the chance, we must be thankful and show our gratitude by being obedient.



SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

BIBLE STUDY: (One verse per day)

1. James 1:18...Whose will is it that we are born into the family of God? What method did God use for this to happen? Why is it important for us to share God's Word with others?

2. 1 Corinthians 13:11...If you have just been born into God's family, what should be your spiritual conduct? Should you feel bad for not understanding

all there is to know about spiritual matters? How are you supposed to become spiritually mature?

3. Philippians 3:20-21...Where is our citizenship? What is going to happen to our physical bodies when Jesus comes for us? Where would you prefer to have your citizenship? Why?

4. Galatians 4:1-7...Why isn't there a substantial difference between the heir when he is a child, and the slave? Should a child be under his parent's authority until he is old enough to handle the inheritance? Why? Compare and write down the difference between the slave's service to God and that of His children.

5. REVIEW...Go over your notes for this week and write a summary of what you have learned in general.

PRAYER: Write down the person or things for which you prayed for today.

FELLOWSHIP: Write down the name of the believer you had fellowship with and what you did.

WITNESSING: Write down the name of the non-believer you witnessed to and how you did it.

HOW TO DO THE SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK:

1. Example:

DATE: Write down the date.

BIBLE STUDY: Write down the verse for the day (only one verse per day). On fifth day do review.

1. Answer question #1-
2. Answer question #2.
3. Answer question #3.

PRAYER: Write down the person or things for which you prayed for today.

FELLOWSHIP: Write down the name of the believer you had fellowship with and what you did.

WITNESSING: Write down the name of the non-believer you witnessed to and how you did it.

2. Start doing the Spiritual Notebook the day after the lesson, skipping Saturday and Sunday. If the lesson is given on Friday, wait until Monday to do the Spiritual Notebook.

3. The reason for doing one verse per day is to establish the habit of meeting with God. Meditate on

the verse. Pray about it. Let it sink into your mind and heart.

**Baptist Church Centro of Life
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