

Have you discovered

# The *Joy* of Christianity?

If not, allow me to share it with you in  
the next few minutes...

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Christianity is characterized by joyfulness!<sup>1</sup> This is because it is a religion of service and purpose.<sup>2</sup> Man who is made in God's image is complete and happy.<sup>3</sup>

Without God, man is alone. By himself he is hopeless.<sup>4</sup> He is doomed to a meaningless existence that surely leads to the grave<sup>5</sup> and then hell.<sup>6</sup> Without God there is no joy, no purpose nor redeeming value in mankind.<sup>7</sup>

But there is a God<sup>8</sup> and this God has revealed Himself to mankind as a God of love.<sup>9</sup> He is mindful of man.<sup>10</sup> He cares and wants to give us life abundantly.<sup>11</sup> We must therefore respond to His plan of Salvation.<sup>12</sup>

In spite of our sin, rebellion, and self-centered desires, which deserve punishment,<sup>13</sup> God has a wonderful plan for us. A plan to forgive, cleanse and bring purpose into our lives.<sup>14</sup>

Friend, have you discovered the joy of Christianity?

1. Phil. 1:25;4:1 2. James 1:27 3. Hab. 3:18 4. John 15:5 5. Ps. 104:29  
6. Matt. 23:33 7. Eph. 2:12 8. Heb. 11:6 9. 1 John 4:8 10. Ps. 8:4  
11. John 10:10 12. Heb. 2:8 13. Rom. 6:23 14. John 2:17

## I was not always a Christian.



I used to wonder what makes Christians tick. Why they attend church and their motivation for doing good.



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Christianity is not an inherited religion.<sup>1</sup> One is not born into Christianity,<sup>2</sup> Neither does one become a Christian because one's parents are.

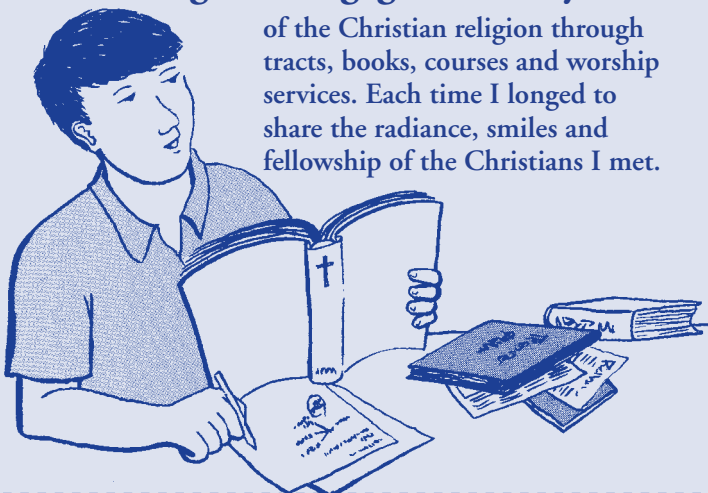
Instead, a person must thoughtfully and carefully ponder the merits and value of Christianity.<sup>3</sup> If it is true, accept it. If not, reject it. You owe it to yourself to consider Christianity seriously at least once in your lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

Why are some people Christians? What makes them do what they do? Why do they attend worship Sunday after Sunday? And why do they do good?

These are just some of the questions that we may want answers to. These questions speak to a way of life that is different, consistent and beautiful. Could there be something to Christianity after all?

## Then I began to engage in a study

of the Christian religion through tracts, books, courses and worship services. Each time I longed to share the radiance, smiles and fellowship of the Christians I met.



We do not have to keep guessing. There are many ways to find out - all of them free and without obligation. We have a wealth of materials you can download at [www.ppcoc.org](http://www.ppcoc.org).

There is literature that teaches various aspects of Christianity. These are readily available at all churches of Christ. Many helpful books have been written by Christians, available for purchase at book stores or on loan from church libraries. But the most important source of information you will want to read is the Bible.

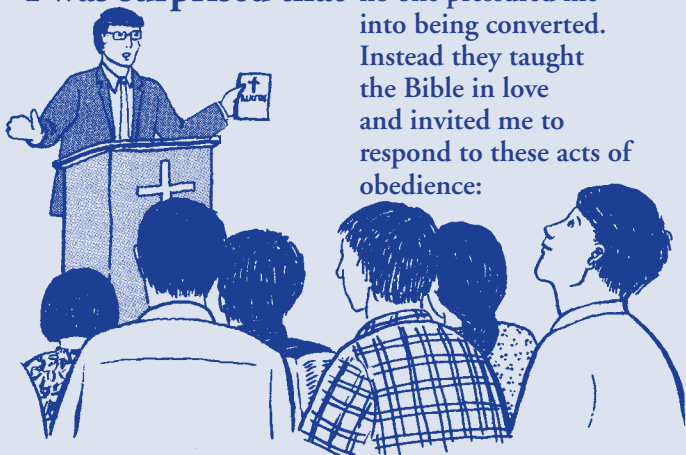
Home study Bible correspondence courses are now available from most churches. This is a good way to learn about the Bible, in a systematic way, at your own pace and in the privacy and convenience of your home.

Another way to get a first-hand knowledge of Christianity is to attend Bible classes, worship services and meetings. You can hear for yourself the teachings of the Bible, ask questions and enjoy the fellowship of Christians.

## After regularly attending church

**I was surprised that** no one pressured me into being converted.

Instead they taught the Bible in love and invited me to respond to these acts of obedience:



As many have testified, the first visit often results in a second visit, and then a third. After regular attendance you will be able to judge for yourself the truthfulness of the word of God and its relevance to your own life.

You may be surprised that no one has pressured or forced you into making a decision about Christianity. This is because as a visitor you are encouraged to learn and decide for yourself. Christ's church is not a conscription, it is a volunteer fellowship<sup>1</sup> where people of diverse backgrounds come together to worship and serve.

Each time as we go to God's word, the truth is spoken in love.<sup>2</sup> And as the message is preached, an invitation will be extended<sup>3</sup> to anyone who is willing to respond in obedience. These acts of obedience will lead one to the saving grace of God.

- *Faith in Jesus Christ - believing that He loved me and died for me as the promised Son of God.*



“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”  
*John 3:16*

The first of these acts is faith. The Bible teaches that without faith it is impossible to please God.<sup>1</sup> But what are we to place our faith in?

The Bible teaches that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore we are to believe in Jesus Christ as God’s Son: that God loved me so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for my sins.<sup>3</sup>

Do you believe in this? The Bible tells us so. History books record Jesus’ existence. The historian Josephus tells of Jesus. Today, millions of Christians believe and trust Him for light and direction in this life, and a home in heaven thereafter.

• *Repentance of past sins - changing my life from serving sin to serving God.*



“Repent ye, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord”.  
*Acts 3:19*

Secondly, you must repent of our past sins.<sup>1</sup>

Having believed that God loves you, and that Jesus died to save you from sin, you should decide to refrain from a life of sin.<sup>2</sup> Sin caused man’s downfall.<sup>3</sup> Sin will keep man from God.<sup>4</sup> And sin will finally destroy man.<sup>5</sup>

The Bible calls you to repent and turn again to God. If you choose to do so, our sins will be blotted out and seasons of refreshing in the Lord’s presence will come.<sup>6</sup>

Friend, are you tired of sin? Look what sin has done to you! Do you long for forgiveness? To cast away your burden of guilt? And be in the presence of the Lord with seasons of refreshing?

You must resolve to stop doing wrong, and start obeying God. Like people in the past, you too will perish with them, unless you repent.<sup>7</sup>

1. Luke 13:3   2. Rom. 6:1-2   3. Rom. 5:12   4. Isa. 59:2   5. Rom. 6:23  
6. Acts 13:19   7. Luke 13:2-5

- *Confession of my faith - declaring my conviction in my choice I confess Christ in the presence of witnesses.*

I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD...



“ If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”.

*Romans 10:9*

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The third act of obedience is confession of faith.

Three Bible passages emphasize this act. The first teaches that if you will not confess Christ before your fellowman, if you are ashamed of Him, He will not confess you before His Father in heaven.<sup>1</sup> That is, if you deny Him now, He will not recognize you in the hereafter.

The next passage teaches that if you will confess that Jesus is Lord, you be saved.<sup>2</sup> This confession is one that we articulate publicly.<sup>3</sup>

An example of this act is recorded in the book of Acts. Philip, a preacher had been preaching Christ to a man from Ethiopia. The Ethiopian wanted to be baptized, and inquired what was necessary for this. Philip's answer was that faith is the first step to salvation. As the Ethiopian's heart was turned to God, he opened his mouth and confessed that Jesus is the Son of God. Then Philip baptized him.<sup>4</sup>

Will the stirrings of your heart lead you to do likewise?

• *Baptism into the death of Christ - the washing away of my sins and walking in a new life.*



“We were buried therefore with Him through baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life”.  
*Romans 6:3-4*

The fourth and final step that adds one into the family of Christ is baptism.<sup>1</sup>

The Bible explains that in baptism, you are buried with Christ unto death.<sup>2</sup> Then, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, you emerge from the waters of baptism to a new life.<sup>3</sup> What a beautiful picture.<sup>1</sup>

Many who profess Christ but have not been baptized are not obeying God fully.<sup>4</sup> The Bible teaches that to be saved, one must believe and has been baptized.<sup>5</sup>

Further, the Bible also teaches that baptism saves us.<sup>6</sup> In the plan of salvation, God is very clear and unequivocal. On such an important matter, God does not leave any room for debate or confusion.<sup>7</sup>

The correct attitude we all need to have when we approach God is to go to His word and obey it.<sup>8</sup> Not to argue, debate or reason our way out of obeying Him.

1. Gal. 3:27 2. Rom. 6:2 3. Rom. 6:4 4. Rom. 6:5 5. Mark 16:16  
6. 1 Pet. 3:21 7. 1 Cor. 14:33 8. Heb. 5:9; Matt. 7:21



**This is a complete response...**



**...which I make upon acceptance  
of the claims of Christianity.**

These four acts of obedience: believing, repenting, confessing and being baptized are the complete response of a person when he accepts the teachings of Christianity.

This is so clearly brought out by examples from the Bible of those who became Christians.<sup>1</sup>

For instance, on the day of Pentecost, just 40 days after Christ died, the Bible tells us that Peter preached a gospel message. Many believed and were pricked in their hearts asking "What shall we do?" The answer was to "repent and be baptized". The account in the Bible tells us that 3,000 people on that day received the word gladly, were baptized and added to the church.<sup>2</sup>

In Philippi, at midnight, a prison guard and his family were told to believe in Jesus Christ. Because they did not know who Jesus was, Paul started to preach to them. They responded and were baptized that same hour, with much rejoicing.<sup>3</sup> This is the pattern found in the Bible.

1. Acts 3:5-13; 8:35-39 2. Acts 2:37-47 3. Acts 16:25-34

# Thus, I

- put on Christ  
*Galatians 3:27*



- am forgiven of past sins

*Acts 2:38*

- am added to Christ's church

*Acts 2:47*

- am redeemed

*1 Peter 1:18-19*

- have a home in heaven

*John 14:3*

**am a new creature!**

*2 Corinthians 5:17*

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When these acts of obedience are followed, many good things follow.

Now that you have put on Christ,<sup>1</sup> He becomes your Head and Saviour.<sup>2</sup> His words will be your rule of life and faith.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, your past sins are forgiven.<sup>4</sup> They are covered by the blood of Christ<sup>5</sup> and no longer held against you.<sup>6</sup>

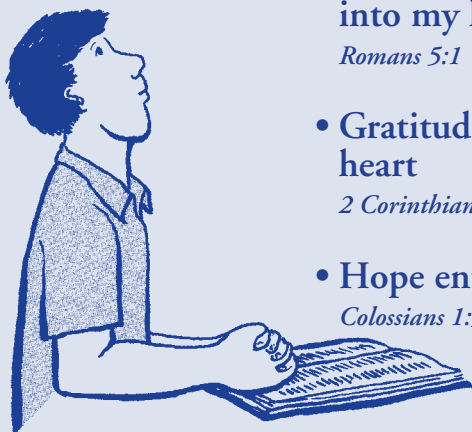
The same acts of obedience that bring you salvation also add you into Christ's church.<sup>7</sup> Because if Christ is your Head, you are then His body.<sup>8</sup> It would not do for a body to be without a head. Also, you have been redeemed.<sup>9</sup> Your sins sold you out to the devil resulting in eternal death. Christ has redeemed you from death.

Best of all, there is a home awaiting you in heaven.<sup>10</sup> This is promised to us by Jesus Himself - our Lord and Saviour.

These and other significant blessings indicate that we are indeed a new creature - with new relationships, attitudes and goals.<sup>11</sup>

1. Gal. 8:27 2. Eph. 5:23 3. John 6:63 4. Acts 2:38 5. Rom. 5:9 6. Heb. 8:12  
7. Acts 2:47 8. Eph. 1:22,23 9. 1 Pet. 1:18,19 10. John 14:3 11. Heb. 12:1,2

## Realising these facts,



- Peace of mind flows into my life

*Romans 5:1*

- Gratitude fills my heart

*2 Corinthian 9:15*

- Hope enters in

*Colossians 1:5*

As you come to realize all these blessings that are now yours, life is really wonderful.<sup>1</sup>

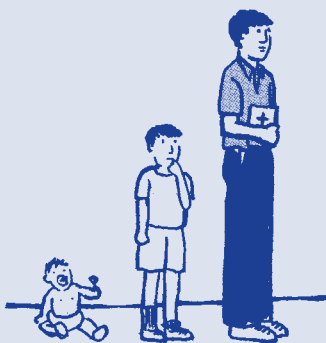
For one thing, you can have peace of mind,<sup>2</sup> having been forgiven, pardoned of your sins.<sup>3</sup> There is now no more condemnation.<sup>4</sup> You may rest secure in the loving and self-sacrificing death of Jesus on the cross for you.<sup>5</sup>

Because of this, your heart will fill with gratitude.<sup>6</sup> Like men of God in the past, you may have difficulty understanding why God would care so much, to do all of this for you.<sup>7</sup> It is hard to explain that kind of love, but you will experience a swell of thankfulness.

With these attitudes, you now can live a life of hope.<sup>8</sup> You may have been hopeless, fearful and self-centered, but you can now experience peace and gratitude exuding joy and radiance once observed in other Christians previously.<sup>9</sup>

1. Ps. 119:129 2. Rom. 5:1 3. 1 Cor. 6:11 4. Rom. 8:1 5. Gal. 2:20  
6. 2 Cor. 9:15 7. Ps. 8:4 8. Col. 1:5 9. Phil. 4:4

## Daily, I will continue to



- study His Word  
*2 Timothy 2:15*
- spread the Good News  
*Acts 8:4*
- follow His life  
*1 John 1:7*
- worship with the church  
*Hebrews 10:25*
- do good to others  
*James 1:27*
- look towards heaven  
*Hebrews 11:16*

With all these privileges before you, there are responsibilities<sup>1</sup> that must be upheld. These duties will help maintain your growth and consistency in daily Christian living.<sup>2</sup> Each day, as a daily process, you should:

1. Study the Word of God: by reading a portion of God's word daily<sup>3</sup> - either using your own method or following a devotional guide. This way, you keep God's word in your heart every day.

2. Follow Jesus' life: to walk in the light as He is in the light.<sup>4</sup> This you do by asking: "What would Christ do?" and "What does the Bible say about it?" in every situation in life.

3. Worship with the church: at Bible study, worship and other meetings. you will want and need to be there, prioritizing these opportunities above all other activities, and not forsaking these assemblies.<sup>5</sup>

4. Do good to others:<sup>6</sup> just as Jesus did. You cannot just learn good without doing it.<sup>7</sup>

5. Look towards heaven;<sup>8</sup> this world is not your home. Getting there is your goal from now on!

1. Phil. 2:12,13 2. 2 Pet. 1:5-12 3. Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 2:15 4. 1 John 1:7  
5. Heb. 10:25 6. James 1:27 7. James 4:17 8. Heb. 11:16

## Problems still come but I am not alone



- God helps me and gives me a way of escape  
*1 Corinthians 10:13*
- and I have learned to rely upon Him for all good  
*Romans 8:28*
- should I ever forget His love and fall away, I will return to Him  
*1 John 1:9*

So many good things will happen when a person obeys Christ. We realize that because God watches over us, all things will work for good - even difficult and bad situations in life.<sup>1</sup>

God has not promised that as Christians, you will be immune to troubles, problems or hardship. But He has promised strength, help and courage,<sup>2</sup> if you will trust Him to help overcome these situations.<sup>3</sup>

Problems still come, but you do not have to face them alone. This is because God helps us to weather the storm. It may seem difficult, but you can triumph, because you have the resources to bear the storm and there is a way out.<sup>4</sup> Your God has seen to it. Also, you can rely upon God for all good - even in a difficult situation. He sees the light at the end of the darkest tunnel and in that tunnel, He is with you, to urge you on.<sup>5</sup>

Even if you do give up, forget His love and fall away, He is always concerned.<sup>6</sup> And when you return to Him, He will pick you up again and help you overcome every obstacle.

1. Rom. 8:28 2. 2 Cor. 9:8; 12:9 3. 1 John 5:4 4. 1 Cor. 10:13 5. Matt. 25:20; Rev. 2:10 6. 1 John 1:9

## Each day is then a

- Grateful day  
*Psalm 9:2*
- Confident day  
*Proverbs 14:26*
- Happy day  
*Psalm 118:24*



This then is the Christian life: simple, beautiful, wonderful! We have a loving God who created us, provided for us and is now saving and keeping us for heaven.<sup>1</sup>

All you have to do is respond to His marvelous grace in loving, faithful obedience!<sup>2</sup> Tune your heart toward His face and He will keep you and help you.<sup>3</sup> And even when you turn your face from Him, He is not willing that any of us should perish, but wants us to come into repentance.<sup>4</sup> For God is faithful and just, if we confess our sins He is ready to forgive and cleanse us.<sup>5</sup>

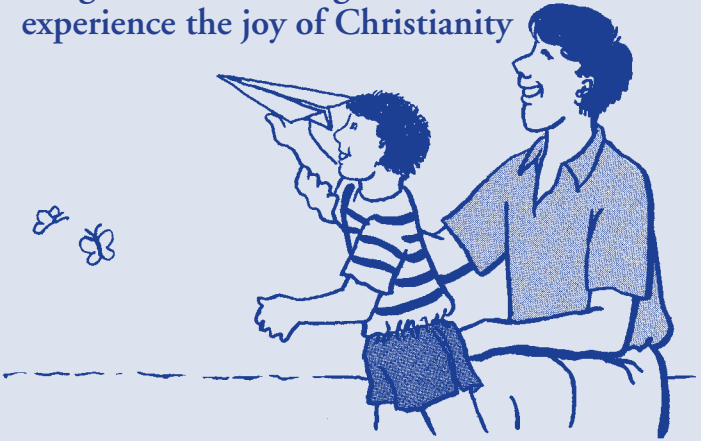
With this knowledge, each day becomes a day of thanksgiving. <sup>6</sup> God has been so kind and good to us that it is almost too good to be true! But it is true! And we are just so grateful to our living God.

Then there is the confidence that we have in God that gives us security.<sup>7</sup> No matter how the world changes and our fortunes shift, God is in charge and all is well. Therefore, as the day unfolds before us, the prevailing thought in our minds is: this is God's day!<sup>8</sup> He created it for us. Therefore let us respond in gladness and joy!

1. 2 Tim. 1:12 2. Matt. 7:21 3. John 10:29 4. 2 Pet.3:9 5. 1 John 1:9  
6. Phil. 4:6 7. Ps. 27:3 8. Ps. 118:24

## As a result

I begin to bear fruit, grow in faith and experience the joy of Christianity



As a result of what God has planned, provided and purposed for us, our response to this wonderful gift brings meaning, joy and hope to our lives.<sup>1</sup>

God has created us.<sup>2</sup> He wants us to obey Him, but we like sheep, have gone astray.<sup>3</sup> Now we can return to Him, because His love and Word have touched us - right to our hearts.<sup>4</sup>

All you need to do is respond to His word, believing it; to repent of our sins, forsaking them; to confess faith in Him, acknowledging Him; and be baptized to wash away your sins.<sup>5</sup>

When this is done, God saves us and adds us to the church.<sup>6</sup> We become new creatures with peace and hope in our hearts.<sup>7</sup> Daily, we grow in this new way, overcoming every obstacle with God's help. We look at each new day as another opportunity to do God's will, to bear more fruit for Him.<sup>8</sup> Thus we grow in faith and experience the JOY of CHRISTIANITY.

1. 2 Cor. 2:14 2. Gen. 1:27 3. 1 Pet. 2:25 4. Rom.6:37-39 5. Acts 2:37-42  
6. Acts 2:47 7. 2 Cor. 5:17 8. Gal. 5:22,23