NEW CONVERTS & FOLLOW UP STUDY MANUAL

SEVENTEEN BASIC LESSONS FOR NEW CONVERTS IN CHRIST

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Evangelism Director
Apostle Amos Jimmy Markin (PhD)

INTRODUCTION

General Objectives

This material is intended to serve as a teaching aid or an instructional guide for the new convert who has just joined The Church of Pentecost for at least the first four months. It is intended to serve as a material for effective followup on the new convert and help them to be grounded in the faith.

This material covers a wide range of biblical and Pentecostal teachings needful for the beginner in the faith. The ultimate aim has been to draw on the strengths and directions that the Holy Spirit provides to understand the Bible and its teachings and to help establish the new convert in their new found cherished Christian faith. It intends to prepare them to become a responsible member of a local assembly and also be ready to share in their new found faith effectively.

It is hoped that the Church, and especially the Evangelism Ministry, will find this material an indispensable tool to instruct and assist them to stem the tide of evangelistic leakages. This makes the New Converts' Guide a ready resource material for all activities towards the nurturing of new converts in the Church.

Aim/Purpose

This material seeks to serve as a syllabus for new converts. It is aimed at:

1. Helping the new convert gain sound biblical foundation in the Lord.
2. Exposing the new convert to Christian faith and all that pertains to it.
3. Helping the new convert to understand and receive the Holy Spirit Baptism and be led by Him.
4. Helping them to be committed to a local church.
5. Helping the new convert to grow in the knowledge of the Lord.

Organising A New Converts' Class

1. **Composition:** All those who come to the Lord through the Church and Ministries' activities (crusades, rallies, campaigns, personal contacts, healing and miracle encounters, etc.) within a specific time period, could be grouped to form a new converts' class.
2. **Numerical Strength:** A class is recommended to be made up of between 7 and 15 converts with a teacher. It should not be too large to hamper class participation and effective follow-up by the leader.
3. **Organisation:** For effective management, classes should be organised in groups. Each group should consist of members of both sexes. Preferably, it should be in the language of the people's choice. Class activities should not exceed 45 to 60 minutes per session. Meetings should be participatory.
4. **Duration of the Class:** The session is recommended to last between a minimum of four and maximum of six months. Every effort is to be made to take each convert through all the studies in the booklet.
5. **Assessment:** After the completion of every lesson, there should be a general assessment through activities such as questions and answers, pick and act, and possibly written examinations to enable new converts to proceed on to new lessons. The assessment is different from the review questions and discussions at the end of each lesson. Any such assessment should be done in consultation with the presbytery of the church.

LESSON ONE

Reaffirming The Gospel Message

Key Scriptures: John 3:16, 1 John 5:11-12

Introduction

The basic core of the gospel message or the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ has been reaffirmed by the Apostle John in 1 John 5:11-12. The gospel message or the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ is that, the Almighty God has granted to all humanity access to eternal life. This eternal life is exclusively invested in His Son, Jesus Christ. Anyone who has accepted the Son as Lord and Saviour has received that life, but all those who have not received Him do not have this life and they are condemned to eternal damnation (John 1:1-12).

The gospel message is that there is no other means by which humankind can be saved except through faith in Jesus Christ and this is the grace of God (John 1:16 -17).

Steps to Salvation – Acknowledge that:

1. All (including you) have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).
2. The 'wages of sin' is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life (Romans 6:23).
3. God gave His son, Jesus Christ to be crucified for our sins. He resurrected to give us new life (1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 17).
4. Whoever shall confess and accept Jesus into their heart and call upon Him (Jesus) shall be saved (Romans 10:9-10).
5. There is therefore no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

Conclusion

Having gone through these basic steps, you have been born again and become a righteous child of God. This means your sins are forgiven and you have been sanctified and justified by the redemptive work of Christ. God sees His Son, Jesus Christ in you and you are planted in Christ. The new birth experience means your old nature of damnation is gone and you have come to be at home with Christ in the Kingdom of God. You are now a 'son of God'.

Review Questions And Discussions

1. What is sin?
2. What does it mean to be a righteous child of God?
3. What does it take (steps) for one to be saved?
3. Why is Christ the only one invested with eternal life for humanity?

LESSON TWO

Follow Up To The Gospel Message

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Introduction

Having taken the golden decision to make Jesus Christ your Lord and personal Saviour, the next step is to understand the decision you have taken. For instance, understanding the nature of the God you have come to worship and serve and also to understand the other believers you are in relationship with. This study discusses your relationship with God, Jesus, humanity and your fellow Christians.

Relationship with God

Having been born again, the Almighty God has become your God and Father. You have been reconciled to Him as one naturally born of Him through His Word and Spirit.

His Nature and character as discussed in scripture includes:

a) Love - God is love, kind, good and merciful. His loving-kindness is over all His handiworks (John 3:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 John 4:11).

b) Holy - He is a holy God. He requires that all who walk with Him be holy as He is (Psalm 145:17; Isaiah 6:3; Matthew 5:48).

c) Just - The Lord God is not only merciful and full of loving-kindness, but also a just God. He is a great judge, the judge of heaven and earth, the judge of all humankind (Hebrews 12:23).

d) He hates and punishes sin (Amos 5:15) but loves the sinner (Romans 5:8).

Humanity's relationship with God

a) Humanity was created by God (Genesis 1:26-28). Humankind was created in His image and likeness. Humankind was created to find purpose and fellowship in God (Micah 6:8); To love God and serve Him all the days of his life (Deuteronomy 10:12).

b) Humanity was to have no other God beside the Almighty God, the Creator (1 Corinthians 8:4; Exodus 34:14, Deuteronomy 8:19).

c) Humanity rebelled against God. They turned away from Him. The result was separation from God and the penalty of eternal death (Romans 3:23).

Your relationship with Jesus Christ

a) Jesus is the expressed image of the invincible God (Colossians 1:15, Heb 1:3). As God, He became man in the person of Jesus Christ to restore the broken fellowship between God and humanity (John 1:14; 25: 18-19).

b) Jesus lived as an example for us to follow. He lived a perfect life and died as our substitute by paying the penalty of our sins (Romans 5:8; 1 Peter2:24).

c) Jesus died in our stead as a propitiation for our sins. He rose from the dead and is alive today to give us new fellowship with God forever (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Benefits of this relationship through the Gospel

(a) Through faith in Christ, by believing in the gospel or Good News of Jesus Christ, one's relationship with God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit has been restored (Acts 16:31; Romans 10:17; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19).

(b) Through a simple act of confession of faith in Christ Jesus and by adhering to the message of the gospel, one has obtained eternal life (John 3:16, Romans 10:10, 17).

Conclusion

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. Everyone must believe in it for salvation. Having believed, one is reconciled to God. The believer must, therefore, live it out and bring others to this saving knowledge by preaching to them.

Review Questions And Discussions

1. What is the gospel?
2. Why did Jesus come to the earth?
3. What is the result of sin?
4. How can you benefit from the gospel?

LESSON THREE

Assurance Of Salvation

Key Scripture: 1 John 5:11-13

Introduction

The new convert has, through adhering to the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ, come to God by faith. He or She has thus, been born again as a child of God. This is a reality; as genuine as a child is born from her mother's womb. The word of God amply confirms this as a reality.

This study aims at bringing assurance to the new born child of God, the reality and authenticity of what has taken place in their life. God's ultimate will is that whoever comes to Him is accepted of Him (John 6:37). Many Christians fail to come to the full assurance of belonging, because of various reasons or hindrances, such as past history and lack of knowledge of the scriptures (1 John. 5:13; John 20:31; Acts 28:28).

Discussion

What is assurance of salvation?

i. It is to have an inner conviction or inner knowledge that God has forgiven us in Christ and accepted us in His beloved Son, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5-7).

ii. It is to have the confidence and inner assurance that we have been saved. This confidence is as a result of our faith in Christ Jesus, as promised in the Holy Bible (John 6:36-37; Romans 10:8-10; Luke 19:9).

How can the New Convert or Believer have this 'Assurance of Faith' in Christ?

i. Through the testimony of the Word of God and not by feelings (1 John 5:1-2,2:13-21; 5: 15-20).

ii. Through the testimony of God and His Holy Spirit (1 John 5:9-12; 3:9, Romans 8:16; Galatians 4:6).

iii. Through the testimony of a clear conscience (Acts 24: 16; Romans 9:1; I Peter 3:21).

iv. Through the testimony of a transformed life (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 John 3:14; 2 Corinthians 13:5).

Hindrances to the Assurance of Faith

i. Doubt and Unbelief (Mark 11:22-24) .

ii. Unforgiving spirit (Mark 11:25, 26)

iii. Grieving and insensitivity to the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30-32).

iv. Deception by the devil (John 10:10; James 4:7).

v. Disobedience to the will of God (Luke 12:47-48).

vi. Wrong companionship (Proverbs 4:14; 1 Corinthians 15:33).

vii. Love of the world (1 John 2:15- 17; James4:4).

viii. Failure to maintain loving relationship with Christ (Revelation 2:4).

ix. Willful or deliberate acts of sinning (Hebrews 10:25-29).

x. Walking by sight and feeling, instead of by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

xi. Disobedience to the word of God (Hebrew 5:8-9; Acts 5:29-32).

Conclusion

The 'new person' graciously accepted into the family of God has been accepted into the church. This acceptance does not depend on past records. The past has been done with in Christ. Focus must therefore, be given to one's present state in Christ. For example, the new Christian must endeavor to continue in the faith and honour Christ as Lord of their life by being sincere in keeping His commandments and continue to follow His examples as enshrined in the Holy Bible.

Review Questions And Discussions

1. What is assurance of salvation?
2. Give a scriptural verse which assures you of your salvation.
3. Name one means by which one can be assured of their salvation
4. Mention some of the things that hinder us from being fully assured that we are saved.

LESSON FOUR

Understanding The New Birth

Key Scripture: John 3:3-7

Introduction

As a result of humanity's rebellion against God, humankind became spiritually dead. Relationship and communication between humans and God, their Creator, became strained and broken. In order for this relationship to be restored or for humankind to be reconciled to God, he needs a spiritual rebirth. This scriptural injunction is what the above scripture reading refers to as the New Birth in Christ. The New person in Christ, having accepted the Lord Jesus Christ and confessed Him as their Saviour and Lord over their life, has been born again. This is the new birth or regeneration. This study aims at bringing the new person to understand this process which has become their reality.

Meaning of the New Birth in Christ

The New Birth in Christ is the recreation and transformation of humanity by God through His Word (the Holy Bible) and the power of the Holy Spirit (John 3:6, 9-21; 1 Peter 1:23; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:26-27).

Words which Reflect the meaning in Scripture:

A. Birth (John 1:12-13; 3:3-5).

B. Cleansing – i.e. washing and bathing from the old life, through the word of God (Psalm 19:12; 51:2; Ezekiel 36:25-27).

C. Quickening (Titus 3:5).

D. Resurrection (John 5:23).

E. New Creation (John 3:1- 5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

F. Conversion – i.e. turning from or around (Hosea 14:2; Luke 19:8).

G. Renewal (Colossians 3:10)

H. Salvation (Colossians 1:13; Mark 15:16)

I. Translation (Ephesians 1:3, 4)

J. Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18)

K. Having a new heart (Ephesians 2:1, 4-5; Colossians 2:13)

The Need for the New Birth

Every person needs to be born again because:

i. Everyone is dead in sin and trespasses (Ephesians 2:1, 4-5; Colossians 2: 13).

ii. Everyone needs to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18).

iii. Without the New birth experience, no one can enter the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-6).

How can one be Born Again?

i. Repentance from dead works (Mark 1:15).

ii. Belief in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12).

iii. making Jesus your Lord and Personal Saviour (Romans 10:8).

Reality of New Birth

This New Birth is a reality, and the same process that underlay the original creation of humanity underlies the New Birth. Human was originally created by the word of the Lord God Almighty and the Spirit, which is referred to as the breath of His mouth (Genesis 1:1-3).

Agents of the New Birth

Two principal agents were employed in creation: the WORD and the SPIRIT. Jesus said these two agents are needful for the new birth: The WATER and the SPIRIT. WATER is a reference to the word of God as an active agent in God's creation, working in the life of humans to rebirth them (Ephesians 5:26, 27).

Tangibility of the New Birth

This New Birth in Christ is as real and tangible as the natural birth. The tangibility of the new birth is that your physical appearance is not changed but your spirit (the spirit man) is rebirthed after the likeness of God (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 6:17)

Result of the New Birth

i. Receiving salvation and a new life (Titus 3:5)

ii. Access or admission into the Kingdom of God (John 3:3)

iii. The opportunity to become a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:24).

iv. Producing in one victory over sinful life (Romans 8:4-8; 1 John 3:9).

v. Producing in a person the ability to do what is right (1 John 2:29).

vi. Producing in one the ability to love others (1 John 4:7).

vii. Protecting one against the devil or Satan's vices and threats (1 John 5:18).

Conclusion

The born again person or the one who has received the new Birth has become a member of the family of God. They have received a new life, an abundant life as well as eternal life. They are no longer under the law of sin and death but the grace of full life and eternal life of bliss.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. Explain the new birth.

ii. Give another name for the new birth.

iii. Is regeneration necessary? Give biblical references.

iv. What is the outcome of the new birth? (Support your answers with scriptures).

v. Who are the causes or agents of the new birth?

LESSON FIVE

Repentance from Dead Works

Key Scriptures: Mark I:14-I5; Acts 2:36-40; Acts 3:19

Introduction

One of the essential basic requirements for every person who is to be born again or to receive the new birth in Christ Jesus is to repent from dead works. The preaching of John the Baptist was to call all men to repentance from their evil deeds. Jesus came after him preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, calling all humanity to repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Jesus subsequently sent out His disciples to preach the message of the Kingdom, asking all to repent from their sins and turn to God. Repentance is still the first requirement for salvation in the Holy Bible.

A wrong understanding of the doctrine of repentance will, therefore, have far reaching implications in the Christian's life. It will affect the way a person prays, views sin, deals with sin, their attitude and approach to worship. In effect, it will affect the whole Christian walk.

What is Repentance?

Repentance implies turning from an old way or from sinful acts and being obedient to God and His word. It is a deliberate act of changing one's mind and direction in response to the word of God. It involves, first of all, a change of mind, and secondly, a change in direction or attitude (Acts 3:19); subsequently bearing the fruit of repentance (Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8) culminating in a change in attitude towards faith in God (Hebrews 6:1).

Ingredients of true Repentance

i Avoidance of the sight of sin (Psalm 1:1).
ii. A sorrow of the desire of sin (Psalm 51:10).
iii. Confession of Sin (1 John 1:9).
iv. Shame of Sin (Romans 7:23, 24).

v. An attitude of hatred of Sin (I John 3:9).

vi. Turning away from sin (2 Corinthians 7:9, 10; Matthew 18:3, NLT).

What Repentance is Not

i. Repentance is not just a show of remorse such as crying. It may involve remorse but it is not remorse entirely. E.g., Judas in Matthew 27:3-5 was remorseful but it did not lead to repentance.

ii. Repentance is not crying after discovery of your wrong but it could include crying when it is genuine change.

iii. Repentance is not absence of punishment

Effects of Repentance

i. Opens the way to forgiveness of sins (I John 1:9).

ii. Repentance relieves one from the burden of guilt (Luke 15:17-24).

iii. Repentance is a fruit of New Birth (2 Corinthians 5:17).

iv. The repented bears fruit of repentance (Luke 3:5-8).

Conclusion

Repentance from dead works is a fundamental and essential doctrine of the Christian faith. The new convert or believer in Christ must adequately understand and adhere to good works. It calls for bearing fruits of repentance and exhibiting a change in character.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. Explain in your own understanding what Repentance means.

ii. What do you think 'repentance is not' from what you have studied?

iii. What will be the effect of genuine repentance in the life of a new Christian?

LESSON SIX

Forgiveness of Sins

Key Scriptures: 1 John I:6-9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Introduction

Forgiveness is the act of pardoning an offender. In the Bible, forgiveness literally means "to let go", as when a person does not demand payment for a debt. One of the greatest benefits at the disposal of the new convert is that they have received forgiveness from God and this forgiveness is through the mercies of God. It does not depend on the respect for the person or the magnitude of sin done in the past.

God's Forgiveness to all Humanity

i. All humans are born sinners before God through Adam's disobedience (Romans 3:23).

ii. The mercies of God are available for forgiveness to anyone who through faith acknowledges himself as a sinner before God (Romans 3:19-22; Isaiah 1:18).

iii. The forgiveness of God is very great. It is as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12; 86:4-7).

What does the Forgiveness of God depend on?

i. God's forgiveness depends on one's repentance (Psalm 51:17; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 15:11-32).

ii. God's forgiveness depends on acceptance and belief in Jesus Christ as Lord (Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 2:38).

iii. God's forgiveness depends on confession and forsaking of sins (Psalm 32:5: Proverbs 28:13-14).

God Forgives and Cleanses

i. God's forgiveness is complete and total (Isaiah 44:22-23, Ephesians 1:7-8).

ii. There is, however, a continuous cleansing and washing of sin for the believer who falls into sin unintentionally or non-habitually (1 John 1:6-9).

iii. This continuous cleansing and forgiveness depends on a person's decision to forsake their sins (Proverbs 28:13).

iv. This continuous cleansing also depends on how one forgives others who sin against them (Matthew 6:12).

Conclusion

The Lord God has made provision for the forgiveness of all humankind. Anyone who comes to Him, confesses their sins and forsakes them is accepted of Him. This He does through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the shed blood which keeps cleansing us from all our iniquities.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. What is forgiveness of sins?

ii. Does God forgive the sinner their multitude of sins?

iii. What are the conditions to have God's forgiveness and cleansing of sin? Describe it from your own understanding.

LESSON SEVEN

Christian Water Baptism

Key Scriptures: Matthew 3:16; Romans 6:3-4

Introduction

This study refers to the Christian baptism in Water as a Christian practice. The Bible infers other types of baptism such as baptism of suffering, baptism of John the Baptist, baptism into the body of Christ and Holy Spirit baptism. The Christian baptism in water is referred to by Christ in Matthew 28:19. It is the baptism carried out in the full name and authority of the triune God – Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This Christian baptism is an integral part of the Christian message as ordained by Christ Himself. The Christian water baptism is a physical act expressing a spiritual truth. In baptism, the new Christian is identifying with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4).

What is Baptism?

i. To baptise means 'to dip', 'to plunge', 'to bury' or 'immerse' (Mark 1:5; John 3:23; Acts 8:36-39).

ii. To put into or under water so as to be entirely immersed and be submerged.

Meaning and Significance of Christian Baptism

i. By baptism into Christ's death, we are cut off from the old life and its nature (Romans 6:3, 5, 11).

ii. Immersion into water symbolises our burial of the old life in Christ (Colossians 2:12).

iii. Emerging out of the water signifies the experience of resurrection with Christ into newness of life (Romans 6:4-5; Colossians 3: 1; 1 Peter 3:21).

Importance of Christian Water Baptism (What does it achieve?)

1. For a clear conscience (1 Peter 3:20-21): In water baptism, one affirms the fact that their conscience has been purified by the blood of Jesus (Hebrew 9:14).
2. A Public Testimony (Romans 6:3): It is a testimony to the people who know the candidate of their changed life and new state (Romans 6:3).
3. Burying the old nature (Romans 6:6-7, 14; Colossians 2:12): It signifies the believer identifies with Christ in His death. They identify with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. Acknowledgement of Faith (Matthew 10:32-33): One acknowledges their faith before men when they are publicly baptised in water.
5. It is part of fulfilling the righteous requirements in scripture (Matthew 3:13-16).
6. It is an affirmation of the circumcision of the heart (Colossians 2:10- 13): The foreskins of sins in the heart are circumcised unto holy living.
7. It is an act of obedience to the command of God (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:16-20).
8. To follow the example of Christ Jesus (Jesus himself was baptised) although the meaning of Jesus' baptism by immersion was not the same as ours. He was not baptised into repentance because He was sinless. His was to fulfill all righteous requirements (Matthew 3:13). That is, to lay down all the steps it takes for righteousness to be fully met.

Who Should be Baptised in Water?

i. Those who have repented from their sins and made personal decisions to accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour (Mark 16:15-16).

ii Those who genuinely become believers by putting their faith in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27).

iii. Those who are mature enough to make their own personal decisions for Christ, i.e., they should be at the age of responsibility or accountability.

Note that, 'Responsible Age' is when a person knows right from wrong. The Church of Pentecost endorses baptism of persons aged 13 years and above. Infants are not baptised but dedicated to the Lord (Luke 2:22-24).

Biblical examples of those who truly repented, believed and accepted Christ as Lord and were baptised:

a. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:35-38).

b. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:17-18).

c. Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:37- 48).

d. The believers in Corinth (Acts 18:8).

e. The Disciples of Ephesus (Acts 19:5).

f. Household Baptism;

i. Stephanas (1 Corinthians 1:15-16).

ii. The Jailer (Acts 16:31- 34).

iii. Cris pus (Acts 18:8).

iv. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15).

Note that: When we are baptised in water, we are added to the visible church (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 2:37-41).

- Who should Baptise or Officiate Baptism? A Minister of God (Acts 18:7-8; Matthew 3:13-15).

  Note: The position of The Church of Pentecost is that ministers (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Overseers and Probationary Overseers) are to officiate the baptismal ceremony.

- Where Should we be Baptised? Where there is enough water for the candidate to be fully immersed in water. e.g. in the sea, river, stream, pool of water, fountain, oasis, etc. (Acts 8:36; Matthew 3:3; 16).

- When should one be Baptised?

  As soon as one repents of their sins, believe in the gospel and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and personal Saviour (Acts 22:16). There should be no delay. Biblical examples are found in Acts 8:35-38; 9:17-18; 10:48; 16:30-34; 19:4-5.

Preparation for Baptism

i. Candidates are given instructions from the word of God.

ii. Guidelines on suitable and decent clothing are provided.

iii. Baptism should be held in a conducive and spiritual atmosphere.

Mode of Baptism

There are three main methods used for water baptism. They are:

i. Aspersion (Sprinkling)

ii. Effusion (Pouring)

iii. Immersion (dipping)

Pentecostals however believe in baptism by immersion as the most acceptable method. Jesus, our perfect example, was baptised by immersion in the Jordon river (Matthew 3:13-16). Again, from our look at the significance of baptism, going by immersion brings the significance to life.

Conclusion

Christian water baptism is a person's clear declaration and testimony of having yielded to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is an act of obedience, one of the most basic steps one must take as they start a new life in Christ.

Review Questions and Discussions

i. Explain Water Baptism.

i. Why should one be baptised in water?

iii. Who qualifies to be baptised?

iv. Give biblical examples of water Baptism.

LESSON EIGHT

Holy Spirit Baptism

Key Scriptures: Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4; 2:37-40

Introduction

The last study, Lesson Seven, discussed Christian water baptism. The next important baptism for believers, especially Pentecostals such as The Church of Pentecost, is the Holy Spirit Baptism. Jesus, before His death, spoke of the Holy Spirit who would be sent by the Father as the Comforter, Counsellor and Teacher to dwell in/ with believers. Jesus Christ did not leave believers on their own. He sent the Holy Spirit to keep us company (John 14:16-18; 16:5-7).

Discussion

a. Who is the Holy Spirit?

- He is God. The third Person of the Godhead (Acts 5:3-4).
- The gift of God to all believers (Acts 2:38- 39; John 7:37- 39).

b. What is the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Believer's Life?

- He testifies of our relationship with God (Roman 8:16; 1 John 3:24).
- He teaches all truth (John 14:26).
- He guides us on the path of righteousness (Romans 8:14).
- He helps us live a life pleasing to God (Galatians 5:16-25).
- He helps us in prayer (Romans 8:27).
- He gives life to our bodies (Romans 8:11).
- He testifies that Jesus is alive (Acts 5:30- 32; 4:33- 34).
- He brings fresh understanding of the word of God (1 Corinthians 2:9- 10).
- He helps us to worship God (Ephesians 5:18-19; John 4:24).

- He baptises the believer with power by Jesus (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:8).
- He gives us power to testify and witness about Jesus Christ (Acts 1: 8).

c. What is the Holy Spirit Baptism?

The Holy Spirit Baptism is an experience in which the believer's whole personality is immersed, surrounded and enveloped with the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, coming over him from above and within (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit convicts the believer and baptises them into the body of Christ. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit which is different from The Baptism with/in the Holy Spirit or Holy Spirit Baptism. Here, Jesus is the baptiser and He immerses and envelopes the believer with the presence of the Spirit.

d. Benefits of Holy Spirit Baptism

- It empowers and emboldens believers for service: e.g. Witnessing (Acts 1:8; Acts 9:17-22).
- It is necessary for the release of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).
- It aids Church growth (Acts 2:14, 40-41).
- It gives spiritual edification (1 Corinthians 14:2-4).
- For victorious Christian living (Acts 2:42).

e. Evidence of the Holy Spirit Baptism

- Speaking in tongues: This is the initial evidence (Acts 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 10:44-48; 19:1-6).
- Prophecy (Acts 19:6).
- Spreading the word of God with boldness (Acts 1:8; 4:23-31).
- Power to live a holy, dedicated and committed Christian life (Acts 2:42).

f. Steps to Receiving the Holy Spirit Baptism

- Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:14; Acts 10:44; 19:5-6).
- Believing (Acts 2:37, 38; Acts 10:44).
- Repenting (Acts 2:38).

- Thirsting (John 7:37-38).
- Praying for it (Luke 11:13; Acts 19:6; Acts 18:15).
- Yielding (Romans 6:13).
- Through the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17; Acts 19:6).

Review Questions And Discussions

i. Who is the Holy Spirit?
ii. How does the Holy Spirit help the believer?
iii. What is the importance of the Holy Spirit Baptism?
iv. How can one know that he has been baptised in the Holy Spirit?
v. How can one receive the Holy Spirit Baptism?
vi. Is seeking the Baptism in the Holy Spirit optional?

LESSON NINE

Devotional Life

Key Scriptures: Mark 1:35

Introduction

Devotional time is the habit and attitude of having special fellowship with the Lord through prayer, reading, meditating on the word of God and waiting on Him. It is a daily quiet time alone with the Lord. It involves a period of heart rending before the Lord, giving of thanks, worship, supplication and intercessions. It is also a time of searching the word of God to know His daily plans, purpose and counsel for one's life (Mathew 6:9-13).

Discussion

What is the Purpose of Daily Devotions with the Lord?

i. It ensures spiritual growth (1 Peter 2:2).
ii. The believer in Christ gets to know Him better (1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 29:13).
iii. It is the means of expressing our love to the Lord.
iv. We receive daily guidance and direction from the Lord (Psalm 25:4-5).
v. We receive renewed spiritual strength and a renewed mind (Isaiah 40:29).
vi. We receive spiritual nourishment (1 Peter 2:2).

The Practice of Devotional Life:

i. Talk to God in prayer (Matthew 14:23).
ii. Begin with thanksgiving, praise and worship (Psalm 100:4).
iii. Proceed by searching of your heart before God (Psalm 139:23).
iv. Allow God to speak to you, especially through His word (Psalm 119:103).

v. Make supplications, prayers and intercession for others (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

What to do in your Prayer closet

Prayer is a personal communication or petition addressed to a deity; in our case, the only True God. This is in the form of intercession, supplication, adoration, praise, contrition, thanksgivings or worship.

i. At the prayer closet, start with thanksgiving, praise and worship (Psalm 100:4).

ii. Confess any known sins (Proverbs28:13; 1 John 1:8-9).

iii. Pray for others (1 Timothy 2:1-5).

iv. Learn to wait on the Lord (1 Kings 19:12).

v. End your daily devotions with thanksgiving, believing that your prayers are answered.

What to do with your Devotional Reading

i. Allow God to speak to you through the scriptures - i.e., read the chosen text carefully; meditate on it (Joshua 1:8).

ii. Ask the Holy Spirit to be your guide (John 14:13-14; Psalm 119:18).

iii. Apply what you read to yourself (James 1:22-25).

iv. Meditate on the word (John 1:8; Psalm 1:2; Psalm 142:5).

v. Respond positively to lessons learnt in the study and through the prayer (Psalm 119:11).

vi. Determine to put the lessons to practice (James 1:22-25; Matthew 7:24).

vii. Write down lessons learnt for the day (Habakkuk 2:2).

Obstacles to daily Devotional Life

i Laziness.

ii. Tiredness.

iii. Excuses.

iv. Procrastination.

v. Social pressure.

vi. The devil's hindrances and daily machinations.

vii. Poor time management.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. Is daily devotions necessary for our spiritual growth?

ii. What do you do during your personal devotional time with the Lord?

iii. Start some of the steps for effective devotion.

iv. How can you relate church attendance to daily devotions?

LESSON TEN

Effective Prayer Life

Key Scriptures: **Proverbs 15:8; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:7**

Introduction

The previous chapter hinted on the importance of prayer and the word of God. The success and effectiveness of one's Christian life depends on their prayer life, knowledge and application of the word of God. The Almighty God is a prayer answering God. He delights in the prayer of His people and His ears are open to their cry. Prayer is the means by which all requests are provided for to the believer. However, Prayer based on the word of God should be done properly for effective results.

Basic Conditions for effective Bible Based Prayer

1. Pray in the name of Jesus: It is the name that gives you access (John 14:12-14; 15:16; John 16:23, 24; 2 Corinthians 1:20; Colossians 3:17).
2. Pray according to the Word of God: What moves God is not your tears or plenty talk. God is only moved by His word (Isaiah 55:11; 59:2l; Joshua 1:8).
3. Pray according to the will of God: (1 John 5:14-15).
4. Pray in Faith: Act on the conviction that the Word of God is true (Mark 11:23-24).
5. Thank God for answered prayer: (Philippians 4:6-7).
6. Forgiveness: Unforgiveness hinders your request (Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 5:23-24).
7. Approach the throne or Come before Him boldly. The believer does not need any intermediary to approach God (Hebrews 4:14-16).

These conditions are just a guide for one to adequately meet the requirements for prayer to be answered. The answers to one's prayer, however, are within the grace and mercies of God who answers according to His own will, plan and purpose.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. What are the basic conditions for a prayer to be answered?
ii. Does an answer to one's prayer always depend on these conditions?
iii. Why should prayer be said in the name of Jesus Christ?
iv. Why should the Christian pray?

LESSON ELEVEN

Effective Bible Study Life

Key Scriptures: Psalm 119:105; Psalm 119:11

Introduction

This study is focused on the Word of God. It is core and central to the growth of the new believer. Just as food nourishes the physical body, so is the Word of God to the spiritual being. For the child of God to grow effectively and be strong against the tricks and schemes of the devil, they need the Word of God (Luke 4:1-13).

Bible Reading

The new Christian must endeavour to make the reading of the Bible a habit. The Bible is made up of 66 books. It is divided into two parts: The Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT). The OT is made up of 39 books while the NT is 27 books. Regular reading of the Bible helps the child of God to know the whole counsel of God.

i. It can be read book by book at a time. It is recommended that the new Christian starts with the New Testament.

ii. It can also be read by combination of Chapters; selected portions of both Old Testament and New Testament Chapters daily.

Scripture Memorisation – Joshua 1:8

It is important that the new believer begins by learning to memorise portions of Scripture verses daily. This instruction is almost compulsory for every Christian. The scriptures which one has committed into memory become their reservoir of strength against the deceptions of the devil.

Meditation On Scripture – Isaiah 59:21

The scriptures must be meditated upon regularly to become part of the believer. It is in it that the child of God finds success in all their ways.

Bible Study – 2 Timothy 2:15

In-depth Bible study is a requirement and journey for the New Convert. The Bible requires that each believer studies to make themselves approved of the Word of God. As we mature in Christ, this aspect of interaction with the Word of God becomes necessary. It is a rudimentary step by step analysis of the Word of God for clearer understanding.

Conclusion

The new Christian or Child of God must be committed to reading, meditating, memorising and studying the Word of God. This will determine their spiritual growth.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. In what different ways should the Scriptures be studied?

ii. What are the benefits of memorising Scripture?

iii. What will meditating on the Word of God do to the believer's life?

LESSON TWELVE

Sharing of Faith (Witnessing)

Key Scriptures: John 1:43-51; 4:4-10; 28-30; 39-42

Introduction

Sharing of one's faith is the obvious result of one having a personal encounter with Christ. One cannot keep mute but proclaim to others the wonderful blessing of salvation in Christ through the virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death and triumphant resurrection.

a. What is the Faith?

The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through which one has been saved (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3)

b. Why should we Share our Faith?

i. It is the Lord Jesus' command and should be obeyed (Matthew 28:18-20).

ii. It is the will of God that all should come to the saving knowledge of Christ (John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:5; 2 Peter 3:9).

iii. Other people need to hear the word to believe (Romans 10:13-15).

iv. Humanity is lost and doomed for eternity without Christ (1 John 5:12).

c. What to share

i. The gospel message (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3).

ii. Personal testimony or experience of one's salvation. E.g., That of Paul in Acts 26:12-23.

d. The Means of Sharing

i. Witness by one's transformed life: This is when the believer uses their Christ-like character, changed life and good works to influence others and to convince them of the power of Christ to save people in their immediate environment.

They, thus, become light in the midst of darkness and salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13).

ii. Witness through proclamation of the gospel: This is the presentation of the gospel through preaching or sharing of personal testimony of salvation (John 4;Acts 20:20).

e. Practical hints on how to share your Faith

Consider two or three people you intend to share your faith with. They could either be your friends, neighbours, workmates or family members.

i. Begin praying for their salvation by name daily.

ii. Pray also for the opportunity and courage to share with them.

iii. Utilise any opportunity granted by God to act.

iv. Talk to them about Jesus and nothing else.

v. Be ready to follow-up and encourage the new believer to accompany you to church.

vi. Be sure they join a local church.

LESSON THIRTEEN

Importance Of Being A Member Of A Local Church

Key Scriptures: Hebrews 10:25; Psalm 92:12-13; Acts 2:41-42; 46

Introduction

Ecclesia is a Greek word which refers to the meeting of people called out or summoned together (in the New Testament). It also refers to God's kingdom for the purpose of worshipping Him.

Discussion

a. What is the Church?

i. The body of believers or people called out from the world; the saints (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 2:19).

ii. Other references to the Church:

- The Local church: The coming together of believers at one geographical point to worship the Lord (Matthew 18:15- 20; Acts 15:4).
- The Universal Church: The union of all true believers everywhere in Christ.
- The Militant Church: This consists of believers in Christ living and actively engaging in the spiritual warfare on earth.
- The Church triumphant: It consists of all who are dead in Christ, alive in the heavens with the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 12:1; 22-23).

b. What are some of the Figurative Expressions used to represent the Church in the New Testament?

The Church is described as:

i. The people of God (I Corinthians 1:2; 1 Peter 2:4-8).

ii. The Temple of God (1 Corinthians 3: 16).

iii. The Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16).

iv. The Body of Christ (I Corinthians 6:15-16).

v. The Bride of Christ (2 Corinthians I l:2; Revelation 19:7-9).

c. How to be a member of a local church

i. By believing and coming to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Personal Saviour (1 Peter 2:4-5; John 20:31; Romans 10:9-10).

ii. Receiving the revelation of the Son of God in your heart (Matthew 11:25, 27; John 20:21).

iii. Faith in God (Mark 1:15; Hebrews 11:6).

iv. By possessing the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9).

v. By the enablement of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13).

vi. Receiving water baptism (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Romans 6:1-3; Acts 2:37).

Note: The Holy Spirit at this point incorporates us into the Church. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-5).

d. What are some of the benefits of being a member of a local church?

i. You are assured of security in the family of God (1 John 3:1; Ephesians 4:3,4; 1 Peter3:13).

ii. Fellowship: A sense of belonging to the company of God (Acts 4:23; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 3:9).

iii. Protection from evil and also from false doctrine (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28, 32).

iv. Spiritual food and nourishment from the Word of God (Acts 2:42; 1 Peter 2:2)

v. Discipline, correction and adjustment of life to righteousness, where necessary (1 Corinthians 5:13; 1 Timothy 3:16-17).

vi. Ministry of life and healing by leaders to members in the body (James 5:14-16; 3 John 2; Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:15; Proverbs 4:22)

vii. Partaking of the Holy Communion (Acts 2:41, 42; 1 Corinthians 1:23-32).

viii. Support to the Church by tithes and offering and the reciprocal blessings of opened heavens (Galatians 6:6; Philippians 4:19; Psalm 96:8; Galatians 6:16; 1 Chronicles 16:29).

ix. Caring for one another (Acts 2:44, 45; Acts 4:32-34; Psalm 133).

x. Sharing of one's faith (Acts 26:15-29).

e. How To Maintain Local Church Membership

i. Continuing in the Apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 2:2).

ii. Continuous fellowship with the believers (Hebrews I0:25; 1 John 1:3-7; Ephesians 3:5, 6; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Philippians 2:1-2).

iii. Participating in the Lord's Supper or Communion (1 Corinthians 11:23, 24; Acts 20:7; Luke 24:35; 1 Corinthians 16:17).

iv. Prayer (Revelation 5:8-10; Acts 1:14; Acts 13:3; Jude 20).

v. Sharing of one's faith (Acts 26:15-29).

Conclusion

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. Psalm 84: 10 (NIV)

Review Questions And Discussions

i. What is the Church?

ii. Can one be a good Christian without going to Church? Give your answer with Biblical support.

iii. What is the difference between the visible and the invisible Church?

iv. If Church attendance is beneficial to the Christian, why do many members fail to attend church regularly? Discuss.

LESSON FOURTEEN

Tenets Of The Church Of Pentecost

Introduction

The Tenets of the Church of Pentecost are the body of Biblical beliefs upheld by the Church. It is the written statement of what the Church believes and practices based on the Bible. They are eleven (11) in number. Every member of the Church is expected to know and live according to them.

The Tenets

1. **The Bible**

   We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures; That the Bible is infallible in its declaration, final in its authority, all sufficient in its provisions and comprehensive in its sufficiency (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. **The One True God**

   We believe in the existence of the One True God, Elohim, the Maker of the whole universe; indefinable, but revealed as Triune God head, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent (Genesis 1:1; 26; Matthew 3:16-17; 28:19; 1 Corinthians 13:14).

3. **Humanity's Depraved Nature**

   We believe that, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), and are subject to eternal punishment and need repentance and regeneration (Genesis 3:1-9; Isaiah 53:6).

4. **The Saviour**

   We believe that humanity's need of a Saviour has been met in the person of Jesus Christ, because of His deity, virgin birth, sinless life, atoning death, resurrection and ascension, His abiding intercession, and second coming (John 8:46; 14:30; Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Romans 3:25; Colossians 1:15; Rev. 22:20).

5. **Repentance, Justification, and Sanctification**

   We believe all humanity have to repent and confess their sins before God. We believe in the sanctification of the believer through the working of the Holy Spirit and in God's gift of eternal life to the believer (Luke 15:7; Acts 2:28; Romans 4:25; 5:16. 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3).

6. **The Ordinance Of Baptism And The Lord's Supper**

   We believe in the sacrament of Baptism by immersion, as a testimony of a convert who has attained a responsible age of thirteen (13) years (Mark 16:16; Luke 3:21). Note that, infants and Children under thirteen years are not baptised but are dedicated to the Lord (Mark 10:16; Luke 2:22-24). We believe in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which should be partaken by all members who are in full fellowship (Matthew 26:21; Luke 22:19 -20; Acts 20:7).

7. **Baptism, Gifts And Fruit Of the Holy Spirit**

   We believe in the baptism with the Holy Spirit for believers with signs following; and in the operation of the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers (Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4; 1 Corinthians 12:8-11; Galatians 5:22).

8. **Next Life**

   We believe in the resurrection of all humanity, both saved and unsaved. They that are saved to the resurrection of life and the unsaved to the resurrection of damnation (Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 20:35; Romans 2:7, 23).

9. **Tithes and Offering**

   We believe in tithing and the giving of free will offering toward the cause of carrying forward the kingdom of God. We believe that God blesses a cheerful giver (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; Hebrews 7:1).

10. **Divine Healing**

    We believe that the healing of sicknesses and diseases is provided for God's people in the atonement (Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:7; Mark 16:18; Luke 13:10; James 5:14-16). The Church is however, not opposed to soliciting the help of qualified medical practitioners.

11. Marriage and Family Life

The Church of Pentecost believes in the sanctity of marriage as an ordained institution by God. It is an exclusive preserve between a Husband (who is a biologically born male) and Wife (who is a biologically born female). The Church honours family life and acknowledges it as the starting point or integral part of the church's structure where training in righteousness and discipline commences (Genesis 2:3-25; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-9).

LESSON FIFTEEN

Walking In Faith

Key Scriptures: Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:17

Introduction

The entire Christian life, from its beginning to the end is a life of faith. It begins by faith, continues in faith and it is established by faith through the grace of God.

What is Faith?

This faith is described as an absolute trust and confidence in the Almighty God and His Holy Word. It is the evidence of God who is not seen with the eyes but believed in through His Holy written Word. Its effect is the trust in God's ability to take care and absolutely give providence, protection and power (Hebrews 11:1).

How does Faith Come?

Faith is a substance which is received. It comes to us through hearing of the Word of God (Romans 10:17). God's Word which is written does not immediately produce faith, but the hearing of it is what brings the faith. This hearing is an attitude of awakened interest and attention, a sincere desire to receive and to understand the message presented. Then out of 'hearing', faith develops.

How to Progress in Faith

Faith, like any spiritual substance, develops and grows. The believer grows from faith to higher or greater faith. Faith comes by hearing but develops or grows through obedience and action to what is heard. The one who hears the word of God and believes, must obey and act upon what has been heard. It is therefore, the consistent practice of the Word of God heard that increases one's faith.

What Biblical Faith is Not

i. It is not believing in anything we may wish, please or fancy.

ii. It is always directly related to the word of God and not any object or thing. An example is, faith in a political party or newspaper.

iii. It is not trust in one's self, strength or ability.

iv Scriptural Faith is different from Hope. Whereas Hope is in the future, faith is present and now.

v. Faith is not Trust. Faith is Active but Trust is Passive.

Hindrances To Faith

i. Unbelief.

ii. Doubting.

iii. Deliberate Sin.

iv. Unforgiveness.

v. Unthankfulness.

vi. Deliberate Disobedience.

vii. Lack of fellowship or Church attendance.

viii. Heeding to wrong doctrine and wrong associations.

Conclusion

Faith is a vital factor in the Christian faith. Prayer is the 'legs' with which the believer gets to God's presence and faith is the 'hands' with which the believer receives from the presence of God.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. What is faith?

ii. How does faith come?

iii. What are some of the hindrances to Scriptural faith?

iv. Why is faith described as 'hands' with which believers receive from God?

LESSON SIXTEEN

Spirit-Led Life In Christ

Key Scripture: Romans 8:14

Introduction

This chapter discusses the next level of continuity and daily guidance in the path of God's will for the new Christian. The new believer is born again by the Spirit of God to become a true Christian. They are baptised in the Holy Spirit to become effective witnesses for Christ but the work of the Holy Spirit should not end there. In order to live daily as a Christian, a person must be led by the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit?

i. The transformation and continual leading of the new born believer into a mature son of God.

ii. The provision of daily guidance into the will of God.

iii. The provision of moment by moment direction to the believer by the Holy Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit lead the new believer?

i. The new believer must begin by learning to develop a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit just as they have with God, the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ(2 Corinthians 13:14; Phil. 2:1).

ii. The primary means through which the Holy Spirit will lead you is your conscience and the Bible (Romans 8:14-16; John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

iii. Allow the Holy Spirit to be your personal guide and teacher (John 14:26; John 16:13).

iv. Do not resist, rebel, grieve or quench the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 63:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30).

v. Avoid sin and association with sinners (2 Corinthians 7:1; James 1:5).

vi. Ask the Holy Spirit for guidance daily in prayer (Jeremiah 33:3; James 1:5; John 16:13).

vii. Learn to wait on the Holy Spirit. Accept His directions: 'Yes', 'No' or 'wait' (Ps. 46:10).

What are the hindrances to the leading of the Holy Spirit?

i. All forms of sin and disobedience to the Word of God.

ii. Carrying of guilty conscience.

iii. Resisting, Rebelling or quenching the Holy Spirit.

iv. Grieving the Holy Spirit.

How Can I Be Active To His Leading?

i. Learning to be sensitive to all His leadings and guidance.

ii. Know how the Holy Spirit speaks to you.

iii. Be constantly obedient and His leadings will become sharper.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. What does it mean to be led by the Holy Spirit?

ii. How can one be led by the Holy Spirit?

iii. Identify some of the attitudes that hinder the leadings of the Holy Spirit?

iv. Why should the Christian be led by the Holy Spirit?

LESSON SEVENTEEN

Temptations, Trials, Tests And Persecutions

Key Scriptures: James 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

Introduction

Capping these sets of studies, aimed at strengthening the new believer in Christ, brings out a prime question: Does the life of faith have any challenges or failures? Can the Christian life be described as always smooth sailing to the end? The answer is NO! The life of faith in Christ does have challenging moments for everyone who endeavours to take that path. These challenging moments could be part of a normal Christian walk. The normal Christian walk is characterised by seasons of temptations, trials, testing and persecutions. Each of these can happen to a child of God in any way or form. The Lord Jesus who is our Lord and Master was tempted, faced trials and persecution. His early disciples suffered same. Every born again Christian will encounter the same in this life (Luke 4:1-13, Hebrews 2:18; 4:15).

What is Temptation?

Temptations proceed from the enemy or the devil. Its purpose is to discourage the child of God and lead them to backslide in their faith. It is geared towards bringing out the worst in the believer. They originate from the weaknesses of the believer before they found the faith. These weaknesses are characterised as the lust of the flesh, the deceitfulness of riches and the pride of life (1 Thessalonians3:5, 1 Corinthians 10:13).

How do Temptations Come or who brings Temptations?

Temptations come from the devil and they originate from one's own lustful desires (James 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

How should Temptations be Avoided?

The scripture has made it clear that God always provides an avenue of escape to the child of God. However, temptations can be overcome through the study of God's Word, effective prayer, dependence on God and learning to walk in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 10:13).

What are Trials and Tests?

Trials and Tests, on the other hand, may come to the believer but they may originate from God himself. The purpose of trials and testing is to refine our lives and leave us with a pure, stronger faith, and strength of character which would make us useful to God and channels of blessing. They are occasioned as avenues through which God himself purifies His saints and presents them strong for His glory (James 1:2; 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Peter4:12).

What are Persecutions?

Persecutions are false allegations, harassment and debasement usually because of one's confessions for Christ and adherence to the Christian faith or a church. Persecutions could come on any Christian at any time or any place. Dependent on where, how or who we are before accepting Christ, persecutions could come to us. However, persecution is part of the Christian's calling. Jesus stated it categorically that all who follow this path in this life will be persecuted. Some may even be put to death (Matthew 5:11; 44; Matthew 16:23; 23:34: Luke21:12; John 15:20; Romans 12:14).

Conclusion

The New Convert in Christ could be tempted to abandon their new found faith but God has promised to make a way of escape for them if they depend on Him and His Word. On the other hand, God himself may initiate or allow a period of trials and testing in the believer's life to purify and strengthen them. Persecution can come upon any Christian at any time and it is part of the normal walk in the Christian faith.

Review Questions And Discussions

i. What is temptation?

i. What are trials and testing?

iii. What is the difference between test and temptation?

iv. What is persecution and in what forms can persecutions come to the believer?

v. Can a good Christian be persecuted?