

This means receiving “the forgiveness of our sins” (Ephesians 1:7). Disciples of Christ have the comfort of pouring out our hearts to God in prayer, a privilege aliens do not have (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:12). Salvation is only in Christ (2 Timothy 2:10). Thus, Christians enjoy the hope of “eternal life” (Titus 1:2), a joyful “inheritance” of a home in Heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4). Through Him we have fellowship with God (1 John 1:3,7), sharing in the blessings that come from the Father through the Son and participating together in the work God has for his people to do. In Christ Jesus we possess spiritual life (1 John 5:12). How wonderfully and richly has God blessed us in His Son!

Although the rewards of being a Christian are grand, many people give various reasons for remaining in the world. These reasons may be real, or they may simply be excuses, but, since we are examining all the facts, both “pro” and “con,” honesty demands we look at them. What reasons do people give for **not** being Christians?

Many people do not want to become Christians because their loved ones are members of some human denomination. They reason, “If I leave my parents’ church, I’ll be saying they’re going to Hell.” Actually, your obedience to the gospel will have no direct effect upon your family for either good or evil, for each of us must bear his own guilt or innocence (Ezekiel 18:20). However, your obedience could indirectly lead to their salvation, if they also were to respond to the gospel as the result of your good influence. But it is true that becoming a Christian could lead to family trouble. Your family may strongly oppose you for following Christ. But the Lord will not take second place to our families (Matthew 10:34-37). You must decide which means the most to you, your family or the Lord. For the sake of your soul, I hope you choose Christ.

Others object, “I’m having too much fun with the sin of the world to be a Christian.” As long as you are determined to sin, don’t pretend to be a Christian. We have enough hypocrites in the church. But, remember, the road of sin is not the way of happiness, neither in this life nor in eternity. Even in this life, “the way of the unfaithful is hard” (Proverbs 13:15). In eternity, we will reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7-8). Furthermore, we must be always ready, for no one knows when the Lord shall return (Matthew 24:44). Surely a mature person will choose the eternal joy of Christ over the brief pleasures of sin.

Some claim they don’t need to be a Christian, for, they brag, “I am a good moral person.” Cornelius, the centurion, was a very good person (Acts 10:1-2, 22), but he still needed salvation in Christ (Acts 11:13-14). That’s because he, as well as you and I, sinned (Romans 3:23), and the only way to escape the penalty of eternal death is through Christ (Romans 6:23). You will not earn your way to Heaven by good morals.

Some fear the sacrifices they will have to make. It is true that Christ demands our all (Matthew 16:24; Romans 12:1-2). He won’t take second place in your life (Matthew 6:33). If you give your life to Him, the sinful world will hate you and persecute you (John 15:18-19; 2 Timothy 3:12). If you make this commitment to give yourself to the Lord, His people will help you as a spiritual family, you will receive all the blessings in Christ, and in eternity you will receive eternal life (Matthew 19:27; Mark 10:28-30). Is not self-sacrifice with persecution for the short time we live here a small price to pay for eternal life in heaven?

Some say, “I just can’t live the life of a Christian.” If one were to say, “I **will** not live the life Christ demands,” he might be speaking the truth. But don’t say, “I **cannot**.” God will not allow us to be faced with a temptation greater than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). You **can** live the life of a Christian, if eternal life is important enough to you.

But there is one objection to being a Christian I cannot meet. If you can honestly say, “I don’t want to go to Heaven when I die. I want to spend eternity in the terror of Hell rather than in the happiness of Heaven,” I will simply be forced to give in, “Go ahead; stay out of Christ, and your wish will be fulfilled.”

Dear friend, if you will become a Christian, you will receive marvelous blessings now, along with persecutions, “and in the age to come, eternal life” (Mark 10:28-30). Remember, by following this course you will have done what any mature person would do, made provision for the future. If you gained the entirety of this world’s wealth but lost your soul, what would you have gained (Matthew 16:26-27)?

The facts are in. The decision is yours. Christ or the world. Eternity depends on your choice. Christians longingly plead. The angels in Heaven are watching, hoping. The Spirit invites. The Son has prepared the way. The Father waits with open arms. Will you, with the wisdom of maturity, choose life, or will you foolishly and childishly, cling to death?

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16)

Questions for Review

I. True/False

1. ____ A mature person makes an important decision by weighing the alternatives and acting accordingly.
2. ____ Moses accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.
3. ____ Moses made his decision based on emotion.
4. ____ A mature person puts present pleasures over future happiness.

Bible Correspondence Course
Lesson Thirteen
Should I Be a Christian?

5. ____ The blessings in Christ are riches, pleasure, and good health.
6. ____ The blessings in Christ are spiritual.
7. ____ You can be saved outside Christ.
8. ____ God hears the prayers of sinners outside Christ.
9. ____ You must put Christ ahead of your family.
10. ____ You can live a sinful life and still be a Christian.
11. ____ You can be saved outside Christ by living a good moral life.
12. ____ You don't have the ability to live the life of a Christian.
13. ____ If you refuse to come to Christ you will be forever lost in Hell.

II. Matching

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| 1. ____ spiritual blessings | A. set apart from sin and to God |
| 2. ____ justification | B. made friends again |
| 3. ____ peace | C. made right under the law |
| 4. ____ sanctified | D. sharing and participating together |
| 5. ____ reconciled | E. ransomed from slavery to sin |
| 6. ____ redeemed | F. benefits for our spirits |
| 7. ____ fellowship | G. harmony |

III. Now answer two questions for yourself:

a. Should I be a Christian?

b. Why not now?

Moses was faced with the alternatives of suffering “affliction with the people of God” or enjoying “the passing pleasures of sin.” (Hebrews 11:25) When he made his choice, he was a mature man, forty years old, having attained the utmost in formal education possible in his age (Hebrews 11:24; Acts 7:22-23). He accounted “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward” (Hebrews 11:26).

We face a parallel choice - not to leave Egypt or remain there, but to follow God's way or remain in sin (Titus 2:11-12). Just as Moses, we should be mature enough to weigh the alternatives and act accordingly. The question is, should I be a Christian?

The apostle Paul summarized the rewards of being a Christian by proclaiming, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...” (Ephesians 1:3).

“Blessings” are things that are for our good or benefit. “Spiritual” refers to the spirit of man, that part of man which, being in God's image, does not die. Thus, “spiritual blessings” benefit our spirits and therefore, are not just for this life, but even for eternity.

Any mature person is willing to resist present pleasures in order to secure future happiness. Thus, these blessings are far more important to receive than all the material riches and pleasures the world can offer, for they involve the soul's eternal destiny (Matthew 16:26-27).

What are these blessings which can only be found in Christ? In Christ we are “justified” (Romans 5:1), i.e., we are made right in point of law and therefore do not have to suffer the penalty for sin, spiritual death. Also, in Him we have “peace with God” (Romans 5:1), i.e., we enjoy a harmony and fellowship with our Maker. Christians also rejoice in freedom from the guilt of sin (Romans 6:17-18). Having been born again, we are actually sons of God (Romans 8:14). Think of it! Our Father is the Possessor of the universe! In Christ we are “sanctified” (1 Corinthians 6:11), i.e., set apart from sin and to God, so that He will accept our service unto Him. Christians are “reconciled” to God (2 Corinthians 5:18), i.e., although we had been separated from Him by our sins, He has forgiven us, and we are His friends again. Those who are in Christ are “redeemed” (Ephesians 1:7), for Christ paid the ransom price to buy us from slavery to Satan when He shed His blood, and as Christians we receive the benefits of that blood.