



# My Bible School Lessons

Exploring the Word of God

## Lesson #24: "Living in Christ"

SCRIPTURE READING: JOHN 15:1-11 EPHESIANS 1:1-8

**Memory Verse: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17.**

One evening a student asked Phillip Brooks a serious question: "Is conscious personal fellowship with Jesus Christ a part of Christianity?" The great preacher replied decisively: "It is Christianity; personal fellowship with Jesus Christ is Christianity. That is what differentiates the religion of the Bible from all others. A man is a Christian so far as he knows Jesus Christ."

This agrees with the words of Christ who said:

**John 17:3. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent".**

When a person knows Christ and is truly converted; when he repents of his sins, confesses them to God, and trusts in the merits of Christ for salvation, something very definite happens in his life. He is a different man. The apostle Paul explains what happens to the one who goes through this experience:

**Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."**

By this figure, Paul wishes to teach that the old life has been crucified and buried and that a new life has begun, and that life is Christ's life, "Christ liveth in me." And of course the kind of life that Christ will live in the new believer is quite different from the sinful life of the unconverted man.

### 1: CHRIST LIVES IN US BY HIS SPIRIT

#### 1. What did Christ promise His disciples just before He returned to heaven?

**John 14:16-17: "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth:"**

#### 2. What is to be the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the believer?

**John 14:17: "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you,"**

**1 John 3:24: "He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us,"**

Here is the explanation of a great mystery, Christ dwells in us by His Holy Spirit.

### 3. How will the Holy Spirit help us in the study of God's Word?

*John 14:26: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you,"*

*John 16:13: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth,"*

*John 17:17: "Thy Word is truth."*

### 4. How does the indwelling of the Spirit affect the character?

*Ephesians 3:14, 16-19: "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."*

*Our prayer should be, "Lord, fulfill Thy promise and send Thy Spirit to dwell in my heart" (Acts 2:37-39).*

## 2: THE CLOSENESS OF FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS

### 1. With what plant did God compare His people in Old Testament times?

*Psalm 80:8: "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it."*

*Jeremiah 2:21: "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?"*

The figure of Israel as the vine of God, the planting of the Lord, was a choice topic of meditation and study with the Jews.

### 2. Whom did Christ say was the true vine?

*John 15:1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman."*

### 3. What spiritual lesson did Christ draw from the vine?

*John 15:4-5: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing,"*

Our abiding in Christ and Christ's abiding in us represent a close personal union between Christ and His followers, a union as close as a branch merged in the parent stock of the vine.

One writer has said, "Do you ask, 'How am I to abide in Christ?'—In the same way as you received Him at first."

*Colossians 2:6: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him,"*

**Hebrews 10:38: "The just shall live by faith."**

"You gave yourself to God, to be His wholly, to serve and obey Him; and You took Christ as your Saviour. You could not yourself atone for your sins or change your heart; but having given yourself to God, you believed that He, for Christ's sake, did all this for you. By faith you became Christ's, and by faith you are to grow up in Him, by giving and taking. You are to give all, your heart, your will, your service, give yourself to Him to obey all His requirements. You must take all Christ, the fullness of all blessing to abide in your heart, to be your strength, your righteousness, your everlasting helper, to give you power to obey" (*Steps to Christ*. 69-70).

**4. Since Christ dwells in us by His Holy Spirit, what fruit may we expect in our lives?**

***Galatians 5:22-25: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. . If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."***

**5. If we walk in the Spirit, what things will we not do?**

***Galatians 5:16, 19-21: "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."***

**6. What other fruits, besides the graces of the Spirit, will be seen in the lives of those who truly receive the Holy Spirit in their hearts?**

***Acts 1:8: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."***

The forgiveness of sins that are past and the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the heart, to produce the blessed fruits of righteousness, are such wonderful experiences that the true Christian cannot refrain from telling others of the salvation he enjoys, And the very telling of the story produces new Christians, for the Word of God will not return unto Him void. And so the Christian bears fruit in the precious souls who are saved through the influence of his life and work.

**3: DAILY SPIRITUAL FOOD FOR THE CHRISTIAN**

**1. What spiritual lesson did God seek to teach the Israelites in the giving of the manna?**

***Deuteronomy 8:3: "He [God] humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."***

## **2. How did the prophets amplify this figure of living by God's Word?**

***Jeremiah 15:16: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." (Ezekiel 2:8-10; 3:1-3).***

That which is eaten becomes a part of the very being, thus, when we eat God's Word, we make it a part of ourselves.

## **3. What application did Jesus make of the giving of the manna?**

***John 6:35: "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."***

***John 6:48-51: "I am that bread of life, Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."***

## **4. When the Jews pretended to take His words literally, how did Christ emphasize His teaching?**

***John 6:53, 55: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."***

"To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in that we are to become partakers of His nature. What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul" (Desire of Ages, 389).

## **5. How did Christ explain this to His disciples privately?**

***John 6:63: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."***

The literary and cultural power of the words of Christ are tremendous, but the real power of His Word is in the producing of a transformed life. Speaking of the effect of the Bible upon the English people in a past generation, J. R. Green said, "The whole temper of the nation felt the change. . A new conception of life, a new moral and religious pulse, spread through every class." This transforming power is the power of God, which operates through the life-giving Word (1 Peter 1:2-25). It was the open Bible that freed the people.

## **6. In His model prayer, what did Christ teach us to ask?**

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). In the light of His later teaching, as recorded in John 6, it is evident that Christ intended to include spiritual as well as physical food in this request. As we must eat physical food every day in order to maintain health and strength, so we must partake each day of the spiritual food, provided in God's Word, if we expect to maintain a living connection with Christ, who is the living Word (John 1:1-3, 14).

### **4: LIVING THE LIFE OF VICTORY**

## **1. In His prayer for the disciples just before His crucifixion, how did Christ**

## **reveal the secret of victory?**

***John 17:17: "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth."***

Knowledge of God and His truth is progressive. We are sanctified, or made holy, as we daily trust God's promises and obey the commandments of the Scriptures. The work of making us holy is God's work. But our business is to trust and obey the Lord! The limitations of the human mind make it impossible for a man to grasp all truth at once. He must learn day by day, here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept (*Isaiah 28:10,13*).

When a man is converted he may know very little of the Christian life. He knows the "first principles" "of the doctrine of Christ," the "foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (*Hebrews 5: 12; 6:1*), but he may know very little else. If he opens his heart to the Holy Spirit and studies the Word, he will be led into all truth necessary for his salvation and living of the Christian life. And as Christ indicates in His prayer, the Christian will find this truth in the Word of God. Peter makes this clear by saying:

***1 Peter 2:2-3: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."***

## **2. As the Christian partakes of God's Word, in what should he grow?**

***2 Peter 3:18: "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."***

Grace is the unmerited favor and love of God. It is His power at work in the yielded life. We are to experience this transforming power every day. And no other means of grace is more effective in changing the life than the daily reading of God's Word.

## **3. With what has God endowed every man?**

***Romans 12:3: "God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."***

Faith, wonderful faith, how much we all need it! "By grace are ye saved through faith," said Paul (*Ephesians 2:8*). Faith is simply trusting God, believing that His way is best for us, accepting His Word when in temptation we are inclined to doubt and hedge. Faith we shall need every step of the journey from earth to our mansions in the waiting glory land!

## **4. Beginning with this foundation, how does the Christian develop character?**

***2 Peter 1:5-8: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."***

Scriptures make the secret of victory clear: "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." *Colossians 1:27*

## **5. What should be the attitude of the follower of Christ as he walks the Christian pathway?**

***Philippians 3:8, 10-14: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. . . that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the***

***fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."***

## **SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL**

"God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God.

"It is a mistake to entertain the thought that God is pleased to see His children suffer. All heaven is interested in the happiness of man. Our heavenly Father does not close the avenues of joy to any of His creatures. The divine requirements call upon us to shun those indulgences that would bring suffering and disappointment, that would close to us the door of happiness and heaven. The world's Redeemer accepts men as they are, with all their wants, imperfections, and weaknesses; and He will not only cleanse from sin and grant redemption through His blood, but will satisfy the heart-longing of all who consent to wear His yoke, to bear His burden.

"Many are inquiring, 'How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?' You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.

"Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God. They do not now choose to be Christians.

"Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith." *Steps to Christ*, 46-48