

Introduction

A Christian is someone who follows Christ. The term 'Christian' literally means "Little Christ" and was used to describe Christ followers in the first century. Acts 11 tells us that in Antioch, after Barnabas and Paul taught the disciples for about a year, people started calling them Christians.

To become a Christian, you only need faith. It's not complicated or mystical. You don't have to say special words or do specific rituals. Some people may choose to pray a prayer of repentance and acceptance, often called the "Sinner's Prayer." This prayer is a way for people to express their decision to follow Christ, but it's not a requirement for salvation.

Becoming a Christian is rooted in faith and belief in Christ. Paul, in Acts 16:31, says, *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved."* This belief is more than just agreeing with facts; it's a faith deeply rooted in the saving power of Christ.

To understand what Paul means by 'belief' and 'faith,' I recommend reading the article "Why Become a Christian."

What is this saving power of Christ that empowers us to become Christians? It is a faith and trust in Jesus as God, His sacrificial death and resurrection, as stated in Romans 10:9. Paul often described this as being persuaded, which suggests accepting a belief that might not seem usual at first glance.

What We Choose to Believe:

What do we need to believe and trust through faith in order for life changing transformation to occur?

- 1. Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God.** He was there at the beginning of time and will reign forever (John 1:1, Revelation 11:15).
- 2. Jesus Christ as king,** who now rules at God the Father's right side (Hebrews 12:2).
- 3. Jesus Christ as the last Adam,** who willingly became human, setting aside His divine nature (1 Corinthians 15:45-46, Philippians 2:6-8).

4. Jesus Christ as sinless, perfectly obeying the law in a way no one else could (Matthew 5:17).

5. Jesus Christ as our sacrifice, dying to pay for our sins, a debt we owed but couldn't pay ourselves (1 John 2:2, Romans 6:23).



Our response should be belief. By believing, we accept God's gift of salvation through Jesus (Acts 16:30-32). Nothing else is needed, and anything more is an offense to God. Jesus came to do what we can't—reconcile us to God. We are born into sin and can't change our relationship with God on our own. We are separated from Him because God cannot be in the presence of sin. But Jesus, though He was God, chose to become human and take our sin upon Himself, paying our debt.

Faith in these truths enable us to believe. We exercise that faith through trust - placing ourselves in His hands and accepting the gift of life He has already purchased for us. When we discover our sinfulness and come to terms with His sacrifice it is not uncommon for us to find ourselves on our knees. A prayer of repentance and acknowledgement of what Christ has done for us is not unusual.

Once saved, we start a journey with God. We get to know Him, enjoy His fellowship, and rely on His strength. But we must remember, we still live in a sinful world and are sinful until Christ calls us home. We will sin. 1 John 1:9 teaches us how to restore our relationship with God when we sin. John writes, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

What Comes Next? Growing Your Faith

Deciding to follow Jesus and accepting Him as your Savior is like planting a small, delicate seed. This important step is just the beginning. Your new faith, like a young plant, needs care and the right environment to grow strong. So, what should you do next? How do you help your faith grow into a strong tree with deep roots and wide branches?

The Bible is key in this journey. It's God's living Word that tells about His relationship with people, guides us, and reveals His heart. To deepen your understanding of and relationship with God, it's essential to read the Bible. The Psalmist says in Psalm 119:105, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* Regularly reading and meditating on the Bible helps light your way, giving direction and insight for life's challenges. Paul says this in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."*



Prayer is equally vital forming the very backbone of your relationship with God. It's not just a ritual or scheduled dialogue, but an ongoing, continuous conversation with God. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, tells us to *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances."* Paul, who faced many trials (2 Corinthians 11:23-27), prayed constantly, in good and bad times. For us, prayer is our direct link to the heart of God, where we can share our thanks, hopes, confessions, and requests, just like Paul did.

We're still human, and we'll make mistakes. Sometimes they're small, sometimes big. We live in a world where sin prevails, and our own nature leads us to do things we don't want. Paul talks about this struggle in Romans 7:13-24, saying he does the wrong thing even when he knows what's right. Sin can make us feel distant from God, like we're drifting without direction. How do we get back the close relationship with God we had before sinning? John gives a simple and powerful answer: confession. As 1 John 1:9 tells us, confessing our sins is the way to restore our relationship with God: *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Service and Community in Christianity

Growing personally and spending time with the Bible are important, but Christianity is also about sharing faith with others. This is where being part of a community matters. Joining a church or a Bible study group offers more than just companionship. These groups are places for growing together, sharing experiences, and learning from other believers. The early Christians knew this, as seen in Acts 2:42, where they “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

Service is a key part of your faith. James tells us in James 2:17, *“faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”* Serving others isn’t about big actions; it’s about small, sincere acts that show God’s love. This could be helping a neighbor, volunteering at shelters, or simply listening to someone in need. These actions put your faith into practice, making a real difference. Remember, service comes from faith, not the other way around. You can’t earn your way into God’s favor.



Being a Christian means constantly growing spiritually, becoming more like Christ. Paul describes this in 2 Corinthians 3:18: *“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of*

the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” This ongoing transformation is what the Christian journey is all about.

Challenges in the Christian Faith and Overcoming Them

Following Christ is rewarding, but it comes with challenges. Just like a ship faces storms at sea, a Christian encounters difficulty in their spiritual journey. It's through these challenges that our faith grows stronger as we rely on Him to get us through.

One common challenge is dealing with doubts. Doubting is normal in any deep relationship, including with God. When Thomas doubted Jesus' Resurrection, Jesus didn't scold him. Instead, He showed Thomas His wounds, leading Thomas to believe (John 20:27-28). Another time, a father expressed mixed feelings of belief and doubt to Jesus about his belief Jesus could heal his child. He said, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). When you have doubts, don't hide them. Look for answers, talk about them, and remember that questions can make your faith stronger.

External pressures are another challenge. Friends or family might not understand your faith, or society may be at odds against Christian values. Jesus said, *"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first"* (John 15:18). Stay strong by leaning on the Bible, the Christian community, regular church attendance, and prayer. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:38-39 that nothing can separate us from God's love.

Sometimes, you might feel like you're not growing spiritually. This is normal, but don't be fooled into thinking you've reached the peak of your faith. Paul says in Philippians 3:12-14 to keep striving forward. Keep challenging yourself: join a Bible study, volunteer, start a discipleship, or spend more time in prayer and reading the Bible.

The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in facing these challenges. As believers, we're not alone. The Holy Spirit guides, comforts, and gives wisdom. This divine Helper is active in our lives, shaping and strengthening our faith.

Trials are part of the Christian journey. They might be tough, but they're chances for growth. They refine us, like fire purifies gold, leading us to a deeper understanding of God's love and grace.

The Decision to Follow Christ

Now, you might ask - what's stopping you from choosing to follow Christ? You know about His sacrifice. You know that He is the way to a personal relationship with God. This

decision is personal, and one day, we'll all face Jesus and account for our choices. Remember, the only way to God is through faith in Christ.

Many people find it helpful to pray as a step from unbelief to belief. While not required in the Bible, it's a simple way to express your faith and commitment to God. If you want to pray such a prayer, here's one inspired by Billy Graham's ministry:

"Dear God, I know I'm a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son. I believe that He died for my sin and that you raised Him to life. I want to trust Him as my Savior and follow Him as Lord, from this day forward. Guide my life and help me to do your will. I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen."

Source: [Peace With God, LLC, A Ministry of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association](#)

If you prayed this prayer or believed these truths in your heart - go tell someone. We are told in Romans 10:9 *"that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* Your prayer to God begins the journey of believing in your heart - now confess with your mouth.