

"I Have a New Life"

The Lord causes every person who becomes a Christian to be born again. Yes, every person who obeys the gospel is born again. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we looking at having a new life.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We love God and want to please the Lord Jesus in every respect. We see the corruption and pain caused by sinful lifestyles, and we know God's way is better. Sin leads to corruption and death, but God's ways lead to life and peace. We choose what is better when we choose Christ Jesus. Thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

Have you ever wished that you could start over without the guilt and shame of the past? Do you regret what choices that you've made and what they caused you to be. Do you wish you could become someone different. Well when you decide to follow Jesus Christ, you can become the person that you can respect. You can have a good conscience rather than live in guilt and shame. The Lord can rewrite your future rather than let your past determine your destiny. The Lord wants to redeem you from sin and give you a new life filled with love and mercy.

Ah a guilty conscience filled with shame leads people to despise themselves; it's the worst life possible and has no place for joy or promise. A good conscience is a taste of heaven. Freedom from the guilt and shame of sin is a great blessing. Knowing that God's love and mercy shine down on you can fill your heart with love and gratitude. Knowing you have changed gives you a new life!

Now we offer this study, "I Have a New Life," free! And if you'd like a printed copy or the booklet that we're offering, "When I Have Christ", and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have many free programs and materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. You can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from John 3:3 to 7, and explore our new life in Christ.

Our reading today is from John chapter 3 verses 3 to 7 and here we have Nicodemus a ruler of the Jews coming to Jesus and telling Him that he realizes that He is a teacher from God because of the signs that He does. Then verse 3 says that,

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

That's a reading from God's holy word and it tells us that we must be born again. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're so grateful for Your love. We're so grateful that You have given us a way that we can be new and have a new life in Christ. And we're thankful Father for all the love You give us. For the joy that we have in Christ and for the grace that's shown to us. Help us to always do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new (creature or) creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." Whether or not we are in Christ matters greatly. We want what Christ Jesus offers—a new and better life filled with love and the favor of God! When you

have the new life in Christ, God's grace shines on you. He hears your prayers and protects you as His child.

In Philippians 3:4 to 11 Paul describes the change in his life from Pharisaism to Christianity: he said, "Though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks (that) he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead."

Now all the humanly praiseworthy things as a Pharisee don't even touch what it means to Paul to know Christ Jesus as his Lord. Whatever human gains he had were just rubbish, compared to knowing Jesus and the power of his resurrection. Pharisaism led to developing your own righteousness apart from Christ. And it didn't work. You can't earn righteousness or salvation. You must have the blood of Jesus and faith in what He's done for us on the cross.

Paul continues in Philippians 3:12 to 14 saying, "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Paul put his focus on the Lord, and he strains forward to serve the Lord and he forgets what lies behind. He won't let anything keep him from the prize of going to heaven to be with the Father and the Son.

2 Corinthians 5:14 to 15 says, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. And He died for all, so that they who live would no longer live for themselves, (no) but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." When I have this new life, Jesus Christ is not only my Savior, He's also my Lord. He is my Master to whom I have given myself and for whom I live. Newness of life means one denies himself and takes up his cross daily to follow the Lord. And it's a lifelong commitment. We learn that we don't belong to ourselves.

And this applies to every aspect of our lives. Our time, our money, our pursuits in life, and our morals should reveal to all that we belong to Christ. The Corinthians, as a people, were sexually immoral, but when Corinthians became Christians they were to leave sexual immorality behind. Paul said to them in 1 Corinthians 6:18 to 20, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Many of the books of the New Testament were written to people who had lived in idolatry as pagans at one time. The Corinthians and Ephesians were Gentiles who did not know the Lord or His ways. You see they lived in selfish, fleshly pursuits because they were ignorant of God and of His ways. Ephesians 4:17 to 19 describes their lifestyle, "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding,

alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.” And I think, what a sad condition! They were living with futile minds, darkened in understanding, alienated from God, ignorant, hard-hearted, and callous. But God still loved them and wanted them to know the blessings they were found in Christ. And that there’s a better way.

Paul contrasts that Gentile lifestyle in the next verses, Ephesians 4:20 to 24. He says, “But that is not the way (that) you learned Christ!— assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”

By the grace of God, Christians put off the old self and put on the new person. They become godly and want to be like God. God grants us repentance, which is a change of heart that leads to a change of ways. The old life was selfish and corrupted through deceitful desires, but the new life pursues true righteousness and holiness. Are you following the ways of the old man of sin or the new ways of righteousness?

The Lord offers us a way to leave the old behind and begin a new life in Christ. And we should take advantage of this great blessing. Colossians 2:12 to 13 says, “having been buried with him (that is Christ) in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses.” Now our forgiveness and unity with Christ takes place when we are baptized. This comes from the powerful working of God. He saved us. 1 Peter 3:21 explains that, “Baptism, which corresponds to this (that is, God saving Noah on the ark), now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Colossians 3:1 to 4 recalls our resurrection with Christ in baptism. It says “Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you died and your life has been hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.” The person who raised up with Christ has a new mindset of seeking things above, being able to live with Christ in glory forever. They realize they will share the glory of Christ when He comes again. Setting your heart on the Lord will replace setting your heart on the things of this life that are going to perish. A focus on the cross and the resurrection will take your focus off of fleshly things.

Peter also talks about a Christian’s change in life in 2 Peter 1:3 to 11: he says that, “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly (kindness or) affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he’s blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Now christianity is a faith built upon the knowledge of Christ who has called us by the gospel to His own glory and excellence. And when we study and obey the gospel, we become partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption of the world. Now God expects His people to grow and to become more like Him each day. For this reason, we must make every effort to add to our faith several important qualities.

We must add virtue or moral excellence and become people who others respect. We must add knowledge, knowledge of God and the truth. We must add self-control as people who exercise control over our desires. We must add perseverance, the capacity to bear up under difficult circumstances. We must add godliness, being people who have appropriate beliefs and practice our faith. We must add brotherly kindness, affection and compassion for our fellow believers. And last but foremost, we must add love, the willingness to sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of others.

Now notice that at the end of this list is an “if.” We are to be “all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election.” And if we do so, we won’t be unfruitful or ineffective. If we practice these qualities, we will never fall and be able to enter the eternal kingdom of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. However, if we fail to persevere in these qualities and turn our back on God, we can’t count on receiving the promises of God. We must be all the more diligent to confirm our calling and election. The idea that we can quit growing spiritually and serving the Lord but still be called faithful is never contemplated in Scripture. The idea of “once-saved, always saved” is not in the New Testament. No one believed it until the 1500s. It’s a human doctrine.

You may be in the middle of deciding if you wish to follow the world or if you wish to follow the Lord Jesus. Becoming a Christian is a lifelong commitment; there is no retirement plan in this life. And when you become a Christian and remain faithful, however, you will enjoy a lifelong blessing of salvation and joy. You’ll have the love and grace of the Lord Jesus. And you can have the peace that passes understanding. You can have a forever future with the Lord in heaven.

When you’ve been redeemed from sin, made a child of God, become a Christian, and when you have repented, you can have a good conscience. You can say, “I’m not all I ought to be; I’m not all I want to be; I’m not all I’m going to be; but thank God by His mercy and grace I’m not what I used to be.” Oh you can live in hope and promise. Do you have newness of life? Have you been born again in the waters of baptism. If not I hope you’ll do that today.

Let’s pray together. Father we’re thankful for Your love and for Your kindness. For the grace that we have to able to have newness of life. And Father help us every day our whole lives through to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

The grace of God opens the door by the cross of Christ for us to have newness of life. When we obey the Lord, we aren’t earning our salvation, we’re acting by faith in the working of God (according to Colossians 2:12 to 13). You see, God causes us to have newness of life, just as He caused Jesus to have newness of life. Jesus had to die before He could be raised, and we have to be crucified and buried with Christ in baptism before we can have a new life too. God is active in baptism, and we are passive.

Paul said to Christians in Romans 6:3 to 7, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into

death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.”

Faith, repentance, and baptism by immersion, all bathed in love, are necessary for newness of life and salvation. Now make no mistake: you must obey the Lord in the way that He teaches. He is the true Lord and He’s the one that determines what one does to obey the gospel. No church council or preacher can change the Lord’s commands. And many deceive themselves, thinking the Lord will accept us however we act. Well, that’s not true. Love obeys; it doesn’t substitute a human path and then call it obedience.

Well we hope that today’s study, “I have a new life,” has blessed you. Now if you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this lesson or the booklet “When I Have Christ”, then send your request to In Search of the Lord’s Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now there’s a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. And you can watch SEARCH on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry” and like the programs you watch. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don’t worry, we’re not asking for money. We’re here to help you draw close to God.

We do ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don’t neglect worshiping at church. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. And if you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll be gladly help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us and tell a friend about this program. As always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.