

When a person becomes a Christian: Life changes!

By Steven W. Cornell

When a person becomes a Christian by receiving God's free gift of salvation – (Jesus as his Savior), he begins to experience significant changes. Inwardly, he will feel God's joy because his sins have been forgiven and he has been made right with God. The realization that this is given to him as a free and undeserved gift from God only increases his sense of joy (see: Ephesians 1:7,13-14;2:8-9; II Corinthians 5:17-21).

Along with his sense of forgiveness, acceptance and joy, he will experience several new desires: *First*, there will be a desire to please God. He begins to be concerned about whether or not his decisions, actions, and attitudes please God (see: II Corinthians 5:9). Sometimes this desire is accompanied by feelings of guilt because he becomes convinced that much of his life doesn't please God (see: I John 1:9). *Secondly*, there is a desire to be with other followers of Jesus Christ. People whose company he would not previously have chosen become important to him. He feels a special kinship with them as fellow-members of God's family (see: I Thessalonians 4:9). This usually leads to a new habit of attending church. *Thirdly*, there is a desire to know more about God. This leads to an intense interest in the Bible—God's word—the place where we learn about the character and works of God. He will begin to read and study the Scriptures and desire to listen to those who teach the Bible.

What do others think about these changes?

When these changes take place in someone's life, well-intentioned (and some not so well-intentioned) friends often see it as nothing more than an unusual new interest in God and religion. They will consider it a phase that their friend is going through – one that will pass with time. Yet the person who has experienced God's saving grace knows that his experience is much more than a passing interest in God. Something decisive has taken place in his life.

Although the new Christian cannot completely articulate what has happened, the Scriptures speak clearly of this change. In Colossians 1:13, we learn that, "God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son." At the time of salvation, the Holy Spirit of God indwells the new believer and opens up to him a whole new dimension of existence in the kingdom of God's dear Son (see: II Corinthians 1:21-22). It is a spiritual dimension in which you begin to experience spiritual realities. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit explains the new desires. It is not a matter of getting religion. It is not a phase someone goes through. It is an encounter with the living God in which He reconciles you to Himself, brings you into His kingdom and gives you the gift of the Holy Spirit (see: Romans 8:9).

What about you.....?

If you desire to receive God's gift of salvation, you need to recognize that Jesus Christ died for your sins and that salvation only comes through Jesus see: (John 14:6; I Timothy 2:5-6). Admit to God that you have sinned against Him and that you need His forgiveness. Ask God to forgive you and to give you His free gift of salvation (See: Romans 3:23;5:8,12;6:23;10:9-11). God promises to save those who call on Him.