

LEADERS'S SUPPLEMENT

Millions are Unsure

A prominent businessman, a leader in his church, sat across from me in my office. By every standard of human measure, this man was an outstanding success. As we talked, it became increasingly clear that in spite of his active leadership in the church, he was unsure of his eternal destiny. And he was desperately seeking assurance of his salvation...

The wife of an evangelist told me, "During the past thirty years, my husband and I have introduced thousands of people to Christ, but I have never been sure of my own salvation. Now, I'm desperate to know for sure. I need your help..."

A student who had just received Christ stood to his feet. With a puzzled and troubled look on his face, he said, "I don't feel any different. I guess God didn't hear my prayer. How can I be sure Christ has come into my life?"

Perhaps you, too, are uncertain about your relationship with the Lord. From my experience of counseling many thousands of students and lay people throughout the years, I have become convinced that millions of church-goers have invited Christ into their lives, many of them over and over again, but are not sure of their salvation. In fact, surveys indicate that 50 percent of the church members in the United States are not sure Christ is in their lives. These are good people. Often, they have served faithfully in their church for years. And yet, they still have no assurance of Christ's abiding presence, no confidence that, if they died today, they would go to be with the Lord in heaven.

Why does this heartbreaking uncertainty exist among so many devoutly religious people? I am persuaded that their lack of assurance is due either to misinformation or to a lack of information regarding who God is. This includes understanding the deity of Christ, the meaning of the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord, and what is involved in receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

Permit me to ask you this personal, so very important, question: What about you? If you were to die today, are you absolutely sure, beyond a shadow of a doubt, you would go to heaven?

In the following pages, I want to share with you a message of great hope. It is a message for which the whole world hungers - and one I believe is desperately needed for the Church.

Great Hunger for Christ

I have found a great and common hunger for Christ in men and women throughout the world. Let me give you just a few examples.

A friend asked me to meet with her brother. She was concerned for him because he was not a Christian. This man was one of the financial and political leaders of our country.

A meeting was arranged. After I introduced myself, we chatted briefly about the

condition of the world and the need for a moral and spiritual awakening, all to which he agreed. I suggested to him that God had placed him in a unique position of leadership and he could have a real impact for helping to change the world for good. But first he would have to let God change him.

I shared with him a copy of the Four Spiritual Laws and asked him if he would like to read it with me. When we had finished reading the booklet, this famous and powerful man humbly said he would like to receive Christ. We prayed together. When we finished praying, he looked up and said to me, "I want you to know I really meant that. Tell me what I am supposed to do."

In Korea approximately ten thousand students, lay people and pastors participating in a Campus Crusade for Christ training conference talked with more than forty-two thousand people during the period of training about how to become a Christian. More than sixteen thousand people prayed with them and received Christ. An additional thirty-eight hundred expressed a desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Haiti during a similar week of training, more than one thousand people received Christ in a single day when approximately five hundred pastors and lay leaders shared the gospel through the use of the Four Spiritual Laws booklet. Vonette and I have visited the Soviet Union several times in the past few years. What we have witnessed and heard is nothing less than miraculous. The spiritual hunger of the Soviet people and their openness to the gospel are far greater than we ever imagined. Christian leaders are spreading the gospel wherever they can with overwhelming response.

Recently Vonette spoke at a women's meeting, which was the first of its kind held on International Women's Day in the USSR. More than three hundred women packed out a century-old Protestant Church to hear her speak. She shared from the Word for an hour, and her talk was followed by two and one half hours of questions and answers, which further demonstrated the spiritual hunger there.

In the past few months tens of thousands of people have received Christ as the result of viewing the "JESUS" film. Today, more than 425 million people have viewed the film with tens of millions expressing their desire to follow Christ as Savior and Lord.

Christians have found such openness to the gospel in Siberia that they have been showing the "JESUS" film around the clock, even in the dead of winter! It's an evangelistic schedule unheard of in the United States. Every two hours, "JESUS" is being shown in a packed room, even at 12 midnight, 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. Starved for God for more than seventy years, the Soviet people willingly endure hardship, even the frigid Siberian nights, to learn about our wonderful Savior.

In Romania one man describes the openness for the gospel in his country. "Our people...are hungry. They are so hungry. Everyone we meet - young people, students - when we give them Christian books, they are so happy!" A Romanian pastor reports, "Every meeting we have five to six thousand people, and we have only 1,500 seats. The large majority stand three hours Sunday morning, two hours Sunday night and two hours Friday night. The street and the corridor are packed with crowds. If it is rainy or snowing or the heat of the summer, they are there. It is something that warms my heart whenever I come to church and see crowds

flowing from every street to that place. I just praise God!"

Missionaries who live in Western Europe and distribute Bibles to Eastern Europeans traveling through these countries also report great hunger for the Word of God. As these missionaries give out Christian literature on Bulgarian, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Russian and Romanian ships, buses and trains, they find hands eagerly reaching for the Bibles to satisfy deep spiritual needs.

Even the seamen on Cuban, Ethiopian and Red Chinese vessels want to quench their spiritual thirst. One missionary reports that when he is allowed to board Chinese ships, he finds many sailors willing and anxious to accept free Bibles. On one ship, his satchel full of Bibles and New Testaments was picked clean within seconds.

These examples are only a few of the many millions of people who are hungry for God throughout the world.

I believe billions of people are unsure of their relationship with God simply because they lack information. We must help them to understand that Christianity is not just a philosophy of life, not just a code of ethics, not just a standard of performance. Christianity is a personal relationship with the living, all powerful Creator God through faith in His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take Buddha out of Buddhism, Mohammed out of Islam, and the founders of other religions out of their religions and little would be changed. But take Jesus Christ out of Christianity and nothing more than form and facade are left. Christianity is a personal relationship with the living Christ!

But how can you be sure of your relationship with Christ? I ask this all-important question again, "If you were to die this very moment, do you know where you would spend eternity?"

Perhaps you have only recently received Christ and are still not sure that anything has really happened - you are not confident of your salvation; you lack the assurance of your relationship with God.

I want to share with you several vital principles which can give you that assurance.

Three Fold Commitment

Becoming a Christian involves receiving the Lord Jesus Christ - the gift of God's love and forgiveness - by faith. It results in a threefold commitment to a person, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a commitment to Him of your emotions, intellect and will. Let's examine, one by one, each of these elements of Christian commitment.

1. Intellect
2. Emotions
3. Will

1. Intellectual Commitment

Christianity is built on solid biblical and historical fact. To be sure you are a Christian, you must understand that Christianity is not a blind leap of faith. The

truths of the Christian faith are documented by centuries of historical facts, study and research. Many scholars have dedicated their lives to investigating the birth, life, teaching, miracles, death, resurrection and influence of Jesus of Nazareth. As a result, we have overwhelming historical evidence proving all of the above.

The evidence includes writings of the contemporaries of Jesus whose lives were forever changed as a result of their intimate friendship with Him. Even Christ's enemies verified His resurrection through their conspiracy to pay witnesses to fabricate a story to explain why Jesus' tomb was empty.

Through these and many more convincing proofs, we know Jesus truly lived on earth; Jesus truly died; and Jesus truly rose again.

In the last years of his life, the German dramatist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote, "If ever the Divine appeared on earth, it was in the person of Christ." The Russian novelist and philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky said, "Even those who have renounced Christianity and attack it, in their inmost being still follow the Christian ideal, for hitherto neither their subtlety nor the ardour of their hearts has been able to create a higher ideal of man and of virtue than the ideal given by Christ of old. When it has been attempted, the result has been only grotesque." Dr. Charles Malik of Lebanon, former president of the United Nations General Assembly, said, "I really do not know what will remain of civilization and history if the accumulated influence of Christ, both direct and indirect, is eradicated from literature, art, practical dealings, moral standards and creativeness in the different activities of mind and spirit." Napoleon Bonaparte, the famous French general, said during his exile, "I know men; and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man. Between him and every other person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I have founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love; and at this hour millions of men would die for him." Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States of America and principal author of the Declaration of Independence, said, "Of all the systems of morality, ancient and modern, which have come under my observation, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus."

More important than what others say about Jesus Christ is what the Scripture says about Him.

Jesus Christ was God in flesh and blood. He came to earth to die in our place. He willingly took upon Himself the death each of us deserves. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus enables each one of us to receive eternal life and free access to almighty God.

Years ago a brilliant young student came to talk to me following one of my lectures at a major university. He was the head of the Communist movement on the campus. He accused me of trying to brainwash the students because I was more mature than they. And he resented me for presenting my Christian views to them, views which were obviously diametrically opposed to his Marxist beliefs.

Instead of arguing with him, I invited him to my home for dinner. We had a good conversation about many topics as we ate. After we had finished dessert, I reached for my Bible." I would like to read something to you from the Bible," I said.

He reacted strongly. "I don't believe the Bible!" he declared. "I don't want to hear anything you read. I've read the Bible from cover to cover, and it's filled with contradictions and myths. I don't believe a word of it." I responded by saying, "If you don't mind, I'll read a few portions anyway." So I turned to the first chapter of the Gospel of John and read: Before anything existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God...Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness - and the darkness can never extinguish it.

To all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. All those who believe this are reborn! - not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan - but from the will of God.

And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory - the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father

"Let me read that," he said eagerly. "I don't remember reading it." He went over the passage thoughtfully and handed the Bible back to me without comment.

Then I turned to Colossians 1, beginning with the 13th verse, and read:

For he (God) has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins.

Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't...all were made by Christ for his own use and glory. He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together.

It was through what his Son did that God cleared a path for everything to come to him - all things in heaven and on earth for Christ's death on the cross has made peace with God for all by his blood.

Again, he asked if he could read that passage for himself. Then I turned to Hebrews 1 and read verses 1- 3.

Long ago God spoke in many different ways to our fathers through the prophets...telling them little by little about his plans.

But now in these days he has spoken to us through his Son to whom he has given everything, and through whom he made the world and everything there is.

God's Son shines out with God's glory, and all that God's Son is and does marks him as God. He regulates the universe by the mighty power of his command. He is the one who died to cleanse us and clear our record of all sin, and then sat down in highest honor beside the great God of heaven.

By this time, the young man was very sober. His whole attitude of belligerence and antagonism had changed. So I read 1 John 2:22,23:

Who is the greatest liar? The one who says that Jesus is not Christ. Such a person

is antichrist, for he does not believe in God the Father and in his Son. For a person who doesn't believe in Christ, God's Son, can't have God the Father either. But he who has Christ, God's Son, has God the Father also.

When I finished reading, he was obviously moved. We chatted a bit. After a while he stood and prepared to leave. I asked if he would write in our guest book. He nodded.

After he wrote his name and address, he penned these words, "The night of decision."

Here was a young man who had come with fire in his eyes, full of resentment for anything Christian. However, through the simple reading of God's holy, inspired Word, the Holy Spirit brought this young man to the point of not only being able to intellectually accept what he heard, but to believe and receive it.

Following one of my talks about the uniqueness of Jesus, a brilliant Indian Hindu scholar with a double doctorate - one in physics and one in chemistry - came to me angry and impatient.

"I resent you Christians," he said. "I resent the arrogance with which you say you have the only way to God. I believe Christianity is one way, but only one way. Hinduism is another. Buddhism, Shintoism and other religions are all ways to God."

As we talked and examined the Scripture together, he began to see that Christianity is uniquely different from other religions or philosophies. Christianity alone makes provision for man's basic need - the forgiveness of sin. He admitted that his diligent reading of the sacred Hindu writings and dutiful observance of the rites and rituals had never enabled him to find God personally. Finally, we got down on our knees together, and this young Hindu intellectual asked Jesus to forgive his sins and become his Savior.

To become a Christian you must squarely face the claims of Christ and believe intellectually that Jesus is God and died for your sins, was buried and rose again. You must believe He wants to come into your life to be your Savior and Lord.

2. Emotional Commitment

Becoming a Christian also involves your emotions.

From the Scripture we know that God has emotions. He feels love, joy, sorrow, compassion, anger, disappointment and many other emotions. The Bible also says you are created in the image of God. As a part of His image, God has given you the capacity to experience emotions. Just about everything you do, from the time you awaken in the morning until you go to sleep at night, involves emotions.

Each person who receives Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord will have a different kind of emotional experience. Paul met God through a dramatic encounter on the road to Damascus. Timothy, on the other hand, was raised in a Christian home where he came to know Christ at an early age and gradually grew in his faith.

One frequently hears Christians enthusiastically sharing how their dramatic encounters with Christ resulted in their being healed of drug addiction, gross immorality or some other distressing problem. The fact that their lives were indeed changed validates their claims.

On the other hand, there are many who have knelt quietly in the privacy of their homes, as I did, or at a mountain retreat, or in a church sanctuary and there received Christ into their lives with no dramatic emotional experience.

Emotions can be misleading. Probably no one issue has caused more people to lack the assurance of a vital relationship with God than a wrong emphasis on feelings. I have had moments of great joy, enthusiasm and spiritual awareness. And I have also felt times of sorrow and disappointment. But I do not depend on these feelings to determine my union with God. My emotions can be very deceiving.

We are to live the Christian life by faith, not emotions. Yes, emotions have a place in your experience, but how you feel does not determine the truth of your life with Christ. Rather, your emotions are a result of your faith and obedience. Our Lord said, "The one who obeys me is the one who loves me; and because he loves me, my Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal myself to him." The Book of Romans assures us, "In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith.'"

There is a place for emotions in the Christian experience, though you should not seek them nor attempt to recapture them from the past. While you should not ignore the value of legitimate emotions, it is more important to remember that you are to live by faith in God and in His promises- and not by seeking an emotional experience.

An acquaintance brought his friend to see me, hoping that he might receive Christ, which he did. But in the course of our conversation, it became apparent that my friend, despite his concern for his friend, was himself not a Christian. So I asked him, "When did you become a Christian?"

"I'm not really sure that I am a Christian," he replied.

"Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that He died on the cross for your sins?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe that if you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, He will come into your life and make you a child of God?"

"Yes."

"You would like to receive Him, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I would. But I'm waiting for an experience. When my mother became a Christian, she had a dramatic emotional experience, and I've been waiting all these years for God to give me such an experience."

Although he was a professing Christian and active in his church, the thing that kept him from assurance of salvation was the wrong emphasis on emotions. I was able to explain to him that he did not have to look for an emotional experience, but could believe God's Word. Finally we bowed in prayer, and as a simple expression of faith, he received Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord and rejoiced in the

certainty that Christ was in his life.

3. Volitional Commitment

Becoming a Christian not only involves your intellect and your emotions, it also involves your will. You must first be willing to obey God and His Word.

Christ emphasized the importance of man's will in relation to the assurance of salvation. Jesus said:

If any one chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth.

Some people are reluctant to obey Christ because they fear He will change their plans and take all the fun out of their lives.

One student with whom I counseled and prayed hesitated to receive Christ because he enjoyed his life of parties and sex. But through the prayers of fellow students and friends, this young man decided to obey Christ. He discovered that what he thought was an exciting life was nothing compared to the abundant life which the Lord Jesus gives. He became one of the most vital and fruitful Christians on campus.

This student had fought against God's will for his life until he realized the truth of Jesus' words:

If any of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your own pleasures and shoulder your cross, and follow me closely. If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.

And how does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process? For is anything worth more than his soul? And anyone who is ashamed of me and my message in these days of unbelief and sin, I, the Messiah, will be ashamed of him when I return in the glory of my Father, with the holy angels.

Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything - home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or property - for love of me and to tell others the Good News, who won't be given back, a hundred times over, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land - with persecutions!

A leading athletic coach held in high esteem by millions of people, a man of sterling character and tremendous ability, shared with me his reluctance to surrender his life fully to Christ. He feared God would ask him to become a minister and to give up the joy and love of his life - teaching.

Many successful people have refused to follow Christ because they are afraid He will demand they sell their possessions and give everything to the poor as Jesus told the rich young ruler to do." Although God does lead some people to give their possessions, He leads others to use their influence for Christ in other ways.

As you walk in faith and obedience to God as an act of your will and allow Him to change your life, you will gain increasing assurance of your relationship with Him.

You will experience God's work in your life as He enables you to do what you could never have done on your own - things like being able to love someone who treats you badly, maintaining a spirit of peace while surrounded by great pressures and problems, developing a growing desire to reach other people with the love of Christ.

But, if you do not trust God and His plan for your life and obey His commands, you will inevitably have doubts about your salvation.

Some people refuse to receive Christ because of pride or self-will. For approximately fifty years, I have worked with the so-called intelligentsia. In all those years, I have not met one single person who has said, "I have considered all the historical evidence and the claims of Christ, and I cannot believe He is the Son of God."

Every one with whom I have counseled who has rejected Christ has always denied Him as a matter of the heart, not the head - a matter of the will, not the intellect. They have used intellectual issues as a smoke screen to cover the deeper issues of the heart.

Many years ago I met with a famous professor of a very prestigious seminary. He did not believe that Jesus is God, even though he had taught thousands of young students who became ministers. One day I was invited to visit this great scholar by a friend who was getting his doctorate under his supervision.

My friend explained, "He does not believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but he is a good man. I like him. He is personable and warm-hearted, and I think you might be able to communicate with him."

The professor's first words to me after I was introduced to him were, "Mr. Bright, when you talk to students about becoming a Christian, what do you tell them?"

Knowing his reputation, I wanted to weigh my words carefully, but before I could reply, he asked a second question. "Better still, what would you tell me? I would like to become a Christian."

He went on to explain that he had recently been reading the Word of God with a new understanding. For a couple of years he had also been studying the writings of the church fathers and biographies of great heroes of the faith. As a result, he had become intellectually convinced that Jesus is the Son of God. But he did not know Him as his personal Savior.

I drew a circle on a piece of paper explaining, "This circle represents your life." In the circle I drew a throne and on the throne I wrote the letter "S" for self. I explained, "In order to become a Christian you must receive Christ into your life as your Savior from sin and the Lord and Master of your life. You must surrender the control of your life to Him."

"That's my problem," he said. "Intellectual pride has kept me from doing this. I've received many honors in the academic world, and I haven't been willing to humble myself before God. For years I have denied the deity of Christ and have taught thousands of young men to do the same."

At that moment we were interrupted by a telephone call, and due to other scheduled appointments, we were unable to finish our conversation. He asked us to

return two days later. When we returned, he took us into an office with no phones and, locking the door behind us, said, "I want you to know that I went this morning to one of the local churches, took communion, and prepared my heart for your coming. I have been meditating on the third chapter of John, and I want you to pray for me that I may know Jesus as my personal Savior."

First I prayed; then he prayed, and then my friend prayed, and that day this man of international renown, like a little child, received Christ by faith as an act of his will. His whole life was changed. His teachings changed, his philosophy of life changed, and he became a new creation in Christ. Basically his problem was not intellectual; it was a problem of pride and self-will.

Another reason people are reluctant to commit their lives to Christ is because Satan has deceived them. Jesus spoke about Satan's character this way:

He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Some years ago I was invited to meet with a well-known military leader. He was a most cordial and gracious person. As we talked, he said he wanted to become a Christian but somehow couldn't make the decision.

We talked together for more than an hour, and finally I felt impressed to share with him a passage from Colossians 1:13,14. I asked him to read it aloud. "God has rescued us out of the darkness and gloom of Satan's kingdom and brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son, who bought our freedom with his blood and forgave us all our sins."

Then I explained, "There are only two kingdoms in the world - God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. Which one are you in?" After some thoughtful moments of silence, he said, "I guess I'm in Satan's kingdom."

I then asked him, "What would you like to do about it?"

He replied, "I would like to move over to God's kingdom."

Then this great general, whose influence was felt over the world, entrusted his life to Christ and moved from the darkness and gloom of Satan's dominion into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Has your enemy Satan deceived you? Have you thought you must become a better person before God will accept you? Has your enemy caused you to question whether God really loves you? Has he caused you to become comfortable with your disobedience to God?

No matter what influence may be keeping you from Christ, I encourage you to turn from that influence - and turn to Christ.

To be sure you are a Christian, you must be aware of basic truths from the Scriptures. You must not only believe these truths intellectually, but you also must, as an act of your will, accept them and make them central to your life.

This begins with knowing that God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.

God has your best interests at heart. He is concerned about your needs and has provided a way for you to know His love and plan for your life.

But you are sinful and separated from God; therefore, you cannot experience His love and plan for your life until something wonderful happens.

You see, you were created to have fellowship with God, but because of self-will, you chose to go your own way as we all have. This self-will with which we struggle is revealed in either active rebellion against God or passive indifference to Him. The Bible calls self-will "sin." Your sin has made you spiritually dead and separated from God.

God is holy and people are sinful. A great gulf separates the two. People attempt to reach God and the abundant life through their own efforts including living a good life, holding to a certain philosophy and practicing religion. But no human efforts enable a person to reach God.

God's Only Provision

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for your sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.

Who is Jesus Christ? Why does He have the power to bridge this gap between a holy God and sinful people?

Jesus' miraculous birth, the life He lived, the miracles He performed, the words He spoke, His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven - all demonstrate He was no mere man. Jesus is God.

You must receive Jesus Christ as God, as your Savior and as your Lord. By receiving Christ you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. You receive Christ through faith, by personally inviting Him into your life. Paul said, "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast." And Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me."

Receiving Christ begins by turning away from yourself, repenting of your sins, and turning to God. It involves trusting Christ to come into your life, to forgive your sin, and to make you the person He wants you to be.

Let me illustrate it this way: Suppose you meet a certain young man or woman about whom you have heard many fine compliments. You like what you see - looks, personality and many other qualities. Would this be enough on which to launch a marriage?

No. There is more to marriage than mutual respect and admiration.

As you become better acquainted, you soon fall in love. Is this sufficient for marriage?

No. There is more to marriage than the intellect and the emotions.

Then you become engaged, and the wedding day arrives. How exciting! Intellectually you believe he or she is the most wonderful person in the whole world. Emotionally, your heart beats twice as fast when you are together.

But now something even more important is about to take place. As you stand before the minister or priest to exchange your vows, you commit your wills one to the other. The marriage is not a true marriage if there is no mutual giving of one to the other.

So it is when you become a Christian. When you commit yourself to Christ, you must give yourself wholly to Him in a commitment of your intellect, emotions and will.

Your life may be pictured in one of two ways. If you are living a self-directed life, you control your interests. This kind of life always results in discord and frustration.

If you are living a Christ-directed life, you are yielding to Christ, and your interests are controlled by Him, resulting in harmony with God's plan for your life.

Our lives parallel that of a caterpillar crawling in the dust - an ugly, hairy worm. One day this worm weaves a cocoon about its body. From this cocoon emerges a beautiful butterfly. We do not understand fully what has taken place. We realize only that, where once a worm crawled in the dust, now a butterfly soars in the air.

So it is in the lives of Christians. Where once we lived on the lowest level as sinful, self centered individuals, now as we trust and obey God, we dwell on the highest plane, experiencing full and abundant lives as children of God. This life begins by receiving Christ into your life as your Savior and Lord.

Some years ago, a woman who had just received Christ through the witness of a staff member asked me to talk to her father about Christ. He was the founder of one of the largest corporations in the world at that time. I visited him in his beautiful home. He was truly a great man. His bearing, his manner, everything about him suggested he was truly a statesman.

He showed me trophy room after trophy room filled with plaques and photographs of him with kings, presidents and all kinds of celebrities. He was a great philanthropist who had given hundreds of millions of dollars to very worthwhile causes.

After awhile he said, "My daughter tells me you have something important to share with me."

With this invitation, I began to talk with him about his relationship with Christ. He was very gracious, very warm, very open and responsive. I shared with him the words of our Lord in His discussion with Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was deeply religious, moral, ethical and above reproach. I read from the Gospel of John, chapter 3:

Jesus told him, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'"

At this point this dear, gracious man in his middle eighties said to me, "Mr. Bright, I've been the chairman of the board of my church for fifty years, and no one has ever told me that I have to receive Christ as my Savior or that I have to be born again! Do you think, in the light of all of the good things I have done through the years, that I must be born again?" I explained, "The need for you to be born again is not my suggestion. It is Jesus who said, 'You must be born again' to Nicodemus, who was also a fine leader and very religious."

Then I asked him, "Would you like to be born again?"

"Yes, I would," he replied.

You Can Be Sure

You may say, "I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and died for my sins. Am I not a Christian?" You are not, if you have refused to surrender your will to Him.

Or you may say, "I heard a wonderful sermon, my emotions were stirred and I had a great emotional "spiritual" experience. I even responded to the invitation to go forward for counsel. Am I not a Christian?" You are not, if you have never relinquished the throne of your life, your will, to Christ.

How, then, can you be sure that you are a Christian? Is there not some kind of confirmation that God gives to those who sincerely receive Christ? I believe there is a threefold confirmation that Jesus Christ is in our lives.

1. External Witness of God's Word

The promise of God's Word, not your feelings, is your authority. His word is totally reliable. As a Christian you are to live by faith in the trustworthiness of God and His holy, inspired Word.

For years Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, had attempted to earn his salvation by his dedication and good works. When he discovered that great biblical truth "The just shall live by faith," his life was dramatically changed, and he no longer labored for the assurance of his destiny in Christ. He believed what God's Word had to say and had assurance of his salvation.

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, was not sure of his salvation as a young man even though he was the son of a minister, the leader of the Holy Club at Oxford and a missionary to the Indians of America. Upon his return to England, he met Jesus Christ at an Aldersgate meeting where he heard the reading of Martin Luther's treatise on faith as a preface to the Book of Romans. Wesley explained what happened in his autobiography. "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, and Christ alone, for my salvation - and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

Before the experience at Aldersgate, Wesley had engaged in a frenzied effort to try to earn God's salvation by his good works. There he received the assurance of God's salvation by faith.

1 John 5:11,12 confirm that Christ is in your life if you received Him:

This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

John 1:12,13 echo this promise:

To all who received him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God - children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

A doctor and his wife from Zurich, Switzerland, sent their son to the University of California, Los Angeles, to complete his doctoral studies in meteorology. Their son Hans received Christ at one of our meetings and wrote to his parents about his new-found faith. He mentioned my name as the one who had introduced him to our Lord. They wrote back asking if he would set up an appointment for them to see me so they might also receive Christ. At great expense the father, mother and their daughter flew all the way from Zurich to Los Angeles for the express purpose of becoming Christians.

This was at the beginning of the ministry of Campus Crusade. I never had anyone even walk around the corner to see me, yet these people were coming all the way from Switzerland. It was a dramatic moment for me when this man of great influence and means, with his wife, came into my office near the UCLA campus.

He began our meeting explaining his own spiritual journey. "I was an atheist for years," he said, "but I found no future in atheism. So, I began to study the religions of the Orient. Again, there was no satisfaction. Then, someone told me the New Testament was where I would find my answers. I began to read it and became convinced Jesus was the one I was looking for. Then we received the letter from Hans telling us how you had helped him to become a Christian. We want you to tell us what you told Hans."

Well, you can imagine how I felt. What a privilege it was to talk to this wonderful couple about our Savior, the living Christ.

I explained how they could receive Christ by simply inviting Him into their lives. He interrupted me. "Mr. Bright," he said, "I've already done that. I receive Jesus into my life every day. On some occasions I ask Him in several times a day."

Now I was puzzled. Relatively new in leading people to the Lord in those days, I didn't know what to say. I prayed silently, "God, help me. What do I say now?"

There flashed on the screen in my mind Ephesians 2:8,9:

It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast.

I explained it is not enough to ask Jesus into your life; you must believe He will come in as He promised. Faith says, "I know, Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Faith says, "I know Jesus died for my sins." Faith says, "I know if I open my heart's door to Him, He will come in." Faith says, "When He comes in, I'll become a child of God." Faith says, "I know that, when I receive Jesus into my life, I will have eternal life."

I told the couple, "God honors faith. He does not honor your invitation to Him to come in. It is your faith in Him and His promise that, if you open the door, He will

come in that He honors. You can ask Jesus into your life a thousand times, and He will never come unless you believe, on the basis of His promise, that He will come. You can depend upon Him to keep His promise to come in if you ask Him in as an expression of faith."

I suggested to them that they invite Christ into their lives one more time and that this time they believe His promises that, if they will open the door, He will come in and that "as many as received Him, to them He (God) gave the right to become children of God."

Even before we prayed, the father's face lit up with assurance of his salvation, and he began to laugh. He was filled with wonder, gratitude, relief, praise and thanksgiving. At last he had found the One for whom he had sought for many years.

He turned to his dear wife and spoke to her in German, telling her what I had shared with him. She began to laugh with what I discovered later was a holy laugh, a laugh of assurance. They had been looking for God, and now the light went on, and they were filled with joy.

They met the Savior, and oh, how their lives were changed. Later that night I had the privilege of praying with their daughter, who also received Christ. The entire family - father, mother, brother, sister - was united in Christ. Eventually, I had the opportunity to visit them in Zurich and saw further the miracle of God's grace in their lives.

I was telling that story later to a gathering of people at one of our training conferences. A woman came up to me afterward. She was in her eighties, her hair was snow white and her radiant face was stained with tears.

She said, "I've been a Sunday school teacher for more than forty years. Every day of my life, I have asked Jesus into my life, and I've never been sure He was there. Tonight, by faith, I asked Him in for the last time as you told the story of the man from Switzerland. Now I know He's there because He said He would come in. He promised never to leave me nor forsake me. I'm never going to insult Him by asking Him in again. For the rest of my life, as an expression of faith, I'm going to begin every day thanking Jesus that He is with me as He promised."

2. Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit

The apostle Paul writes, "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." Paul emphasized the validity of this inner source of assurance to the Thessalonian converts:

When we brought you the good news, it was not just meaningless chatter to you; no, you listened with great interest. What we told you produced a powerful effect on you, for the Holy Spirit gave you great and full assurance that what we said was true.

3. Changed Life

Your changed life is a witness to the fact that you are a Christian. Paul records, "When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!" John says, "How can we be sure that

we belong to him? By looking within ourselves: are we really trying to do what he wants us to? Someone may say, 'I am a Christian; I am on my way to heaven; I belong to Christ.' But if he doesn't do what Christ tells him to, he is a liar. But those who do what Christ tells them to will learn to love God more and more. This is the way to know whether or not you are a Christian. Anyone who says he is a Christian should live as Christ did."

I remember well the night I prayed, "God, what do You want me to do with my life?" It was a simple, quiet prayer. But I meant what I prayed, and God heard me.

My life began to gradually change as I studied the Scriptures with other believers in the First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. With the passing of time, I began to feel the assurance of God's love and forgiveness. My relationship with Him became the most important experience in my life.

If you have never personally received Jesus Christ, or if you have any doubts about your salvation, you can receive Him right now through faith. You can open the door of your life to Christ by expressing your faith to Him in prayer. The following prayer may express your desire:

Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal and abundant life. Take control of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

You do not become a Christian by simply praying this or any other prayer. You become a Christian by faith and by faith alone. Faith is putting your trust in God and His promises. I encourage you to say this prayer aloud in faith, for it is through prayer - talking to God - that you can express your faith in Christ and the promises of His Word.

If you have invited Jesus Christ into your life, you can now have confidence that He is in your life and has given you eternal life as He promised.

Jesus would not deceive you. You can be sure, if you asked Him into your life, He now lives inside you and will give you the abundant, eternal life He promised.

I encourage you, right now, to thank God for His faithfulness to you and for His presence in your life. Do not depend on your feelings. God's Word is your authority. Faith and obedience always results in the awareness of our Lord's presence.

Begin to spend some time each day in Bible study and prayer. It is best to set aside a particular time each day to do this and to make it a habit. This will help you grow and mature in your faith.

Become associated with vital Christians. If you do not belong to a local church, don't wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and God's Word is preached. Make plans to start this week and to attend regularly. If you have not already been baptized, plan to be baptized as an outward expression of your identification with Christ.

Now that you are sure you are a Christian, I encourage you to experience the joy of helping others receive Christ. Share your faith in Christ with your friends and neighbors at every opportunity. The apostle Paul was so excited about Jesus that he

exclaimed in Colossians 1:28, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen." Take the initiative to tell everyone you meet about the person and claims of our Lord Jesus Christ and the revolutionary way He can change their lives - and how they, too, can be sure they are a Christian.

Remember, How You Can Be Sure You Are a Christian is a transferable concept. You can master it by reading it six times; then pass it on to others as our Lord commands us in Matthew 28:20, "Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you." The apostle Paul encouraged us to do the same: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (2 Timothy 2:2).

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<http://www.transferableconcepts.org/index.html>