

# CHRISTIANITY

FOR BEGINNERS

MIKE MAZZALONGO

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

bibleTalk<sup>TV</sup>



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# Christianity for Beginners

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**Mike Mazzalongo**

This series explains basic topics such as belief in God, the history and writing of the Bible, the person of Jesus, the nature of salvation and more. All presented in an easy-to-understand approach suitable for those less familiar with the Bible or the Christian religion.



**[bibletalk.tv/christianity-for-beginners](https://bibletalk.tv/christianity-for-beginners)**

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# Overall Teaching Strategy

It is recommended that teachers use a combination of informal lecture and guided discussion to present these lessons. There are discussion questions associated with each lesson that teachers may use and/or supplement their own questions. A student note guide is also provided for each lesson.

It is also recommended that teachers have students view the associated video or read the text for the lesson. This helps students come to the class ready to discuss the lesson and to formulate questions of their own. Teachers should begin the class with a review of key points from the video/text before starting the discussion.

Begin each lesson with appropriate introductory statements that help students focus on the lesson. Teachers should also provide a brief summary of the previous lesson and an overview of key points of the new lesson. This helps students see the ongoing narrative of scripture.

Conclude the lesson by summarizing, or having students summarize, the information from their notes. It is also helpful to ask questions from the lesson to determine that students grasp the concepts. Asking questions in this manner serves as an assessment to ensure objectives are met.

Challenge students with a call to action to apply this information to their lives to help them grow spiritually and help others to do so as well. This can be accomplished by asking questions of students as to how this information relates to their spiritual development at this time and moving forward.

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For more information on teaching adults, please visit:

<https://bibletalk.tv/101/teaching>

# Lesson #1 – Belief in God

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This lesson is foundational for the remaining lessons of this series. This lesson flows from the materials with the same title on the BibleTalk.tv website. Teachers should review the relevant materials and have students review the materials before class.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand the basis for belief in God.
- **Feel:** Strengthen belief in God.
- **Do:** Explain the basis for one's belief in God.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 1 of 7 - Belief in God)
- Lesson Notes (Used with Video Lesson)
- Advanced Student Notes (Used in Teacher-led Class Discussion)

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – Human reasoning

- 1.1 – The First Cause Argument
- 1.2 – The Complexity Argument
- 1.3 – The Moral/Spiritual Argument

### 2.0 – The Bible

- 2.1 – Single source of knowledge of God
- 2.2 – God as a creative being
- 2.3 – God as a loving God
- 2.4 – God as a judge

### 3.0 – Jesus Christ

- 3.1 – Knowledge of Jesus from scripture
- 3.2 – What Jesus teaches us of God

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### 1. Why has mankind generally believed in a “higher power”?

Man has always recognized a power greater than himself as he considers the magnitude of nature. In some cases, it was born out of fear and superstitions. In other situations, it was from a recognition of mankind’s inadequacy or ability to explain life.

### 2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of relying on human reasoning to understand the existence of God?

**Strengths:** Man possesses the ability to analyze situations in life and draw conclusions. The more understanding we have, the greater the ability to continue using our minds to answer questions.

**Weaknesses:** Some rely solely on their ability to reason. This has led to a variety of false perceptions such as the ability of man to answer questions about creation and the existence and character of God without the assistance of divine revelation. Further, humans are subject to changing insights as knowledge grows.

### 3. What is the primary weakness of the “First Cause Argument” in trying to explain the existence of God?

Those that hold this view cannot explain who or what caused the “big bang” that started creation or where the elements came from to begin with. Something cannot be created from nothing.

### 4. How is the “Complexity Argument” and the “Human Reasoning Argument” related as explanations for the existence of God?

The complexity argument holds that only a complex being could have created something as complex as our universe and life.

**5. Summarize the “Moral/Spiritual Argument” to explain the existence of God.**

The moral/spiritual argument is beyond the existence of simple matter. It must come from a higher being such as God.

**6. How does the Bible aid our understanding of God?**

The Bible provides insights into the concept of God, His character and the creative process.

**7. Which characteristic of Jesus best demonstrates the existence of God? Why?**

Jesus taught and demonstrated all the characteristics God the Father created in us and requires of us. Our Lord’s love, compassion and sacrificial actions point to a just and merciful God.

**8. Comment on the following statement: We do not have to understand the existence of God, but we do need to believe in the existence of God.**

This is the essence of faith. There are many concepts in scripture that are beyond our understanding. God wants us to know Him and His will. As we grow spiritually, and at a time the Holy Spirit determines our readiness, God will provide us with more understanding. Additionally, as life changes, our application of scripture changes.

**9. How can you as a student use this information to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance of concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provides a basis for belief in God.





# Lesson #2 – The Christian Religion

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The focus of this lesson is to examine the Christian religion in comparison to other major religions of the world. Teachers should review the relevant materials and have students review the materials before class.

Due to the amount and depth of information, it is recommended that this lesson be divided into two sections. The first section is more general in nature addressing the definition of religions and the characteristics of primitive and organized religions of the world. The second section addresses why Christianity is superior to other major religions.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand why Christianity is superior to other major religions of the world.
- **Feel:** Appreciate the teachings of Jesus regarding salvation.
- **Do:** Apply the teachings of Jesus as we grow spiritually.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 2 of 7 – The Christian Religion)
- Lesson Notes
- Advanced Student Notes

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – Major Religions of the World

- 1.1 Religion defined
- 1.2 Characteristics of primitive religions
- 1.3 Roots of primitive religions
- 1.4 Characteristics of organized religions
- 1.5 Major religions

### 2.0 – The Supremacy of Christianity

- 2.1 Superior revelation of God
- 2.2 Superior leader
- 2.3 Superior solution to humanity's problems

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### **1. What are some religions you’ve heard about or are familiar with?**

Responses will vary. Look for how some perceive a “branch” of a given religion rather than the religion itself (i.e. Baptist or Catholic rather than the general term, “Christianity”. Refer to this difference later in this first point.)

### **2. Why do you think that there are so many religions in the world?**

Responses will vary but look for key points such as man’s preferences, lack of knowledge, or how one is taught. Also consider that it shows mankind generally recognizes that there must be a superior being that is greater than man. In our realization of this we are compelled to seek to worship this superior being.

### **3. How do you define religion?**

Our acknowledgement and actions to worship a higher being (God).

### **4. What elements of primitive religions can we see in certain forms of Christianity?**

Responses will vary but look for elements such as: worship of saints, pictorial depictions of people thought to be deity, mystical practices, burning of candles and incense, use of drugs for heightened awareness.

## **5. What elements of organized religions can we see in Christianity?**

Anticipated response: It has a history/origin, it recognizes a deity (the Trinity), It defines the origin and makeup of humanity in relation to God, it has a process for man's salvation, a method of worship, although universal, there are pockets of Christianity more prevalent than other areas.

## **6. Why does God permit so many religions to exist and grow?**

Answers will vary. If not stated, consider these thoughts:

- Man has historically felt the need to recognize and worship a higher being. Not knowing the identity of deity, he has created a god and worship process to help understand.
- God gives mankind the gift of choice. We've not always used it well.
- Mankind has a history of rebelling against God and wanting his own way over God's.

## **7. What one thing, in your opinion, makes Christianity superior to other religions? Why?**

Answers will vary but look for information gained from the presentation.

## **8. What are some views people hold of God?**

Anticipated Response: Benevolent dictator, vengeful, loving, creative, etc.

## **9. What is the underlying problem that causes human suffering?**

Answers will vary. Separation from God because of disobedience to God's laws (sin) leads to guilt, shame, rebellion, death, judgment, and condemnation.

## **10. What solution did God provide for our problem with sin?**

Answers will vary. God Himself takes the responsibility for paying off mankind's moral debt through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

## **11. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What does Paul state is the basis of our salvation?**

We are saved by grace through faith. We cannot earn it by our religious practices, pure living, or doing good deeds. What we do as Christians are ongoing expressions of faith but not the dynamic that ultimately saves them.

## **12. What are some expectations we have as Christians in this life?**

Answers will vary. If not stated, consider the following items:

- Freedom from guilt and death
- Peace of mind
- Loving relationships with other believers
- Greater insight into the mind of God
- A spiritual renewal
- In addition to these things Christians can look forward to an afterlife where they are:
  - Conscious spirits with personal identity
  - Free from physical limits including death and sin
  - Joined to God in an intimate personal relationship for eternity

## **13. How can you as a student use this to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance of concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provides clarity of understanding the superiority of the Christian religion.

# Lesson #3 – The Bible

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The focus of this lesson is on three primary things about the Bible: its content, history and claims. Teachers should review the relevant materials and have students review the materials before class.

Due to the complexity and scope of this material it is recommended that this lesson be presented in two sections. The first section focuses on the content and history of the Old and New Testaments. The second section focuses on the claims of the Bible.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand how the Bible was developed.
- **Feel:** Appreciate the value of the Bible as God’s revealed will for man.
- **Do:** Study the Bible to discover and apply God’s will for salvation and daily living in His Kingdom.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 3 of 7 – The Bible)
- Lesson Notes
- Advanced Student Notes

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – Bible Content and History

- 1.1 Old Testament origin, organization, and story
- 1.2 The New Testament Origin
- 1.3 The New Testament Canon
- 1.4 Value of the New Testament
- 1.5 The circulation of the New Testament
- 1.6 New Testament translations

### 2.0 – Bible Claims

- 2.1 Its ability to survive
- 2.2 Its uniqueness
- 2.3 Fulfilled prophesy

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### 1. What is meant by, “God’s revealed will”?

It is an expression to describe the written word of God contained in scripture.

### 2. Why would man need a document such as the Bible?

Anticipated response. It is how God chooses to communicate His revealed will. By documenting it in written form, it is available to everyone over time and not subject to changing ideas from man.

### 3. What is the main story of the Old Testament and why is it important?

The Old Testament reveals God’s relationship with mankind in general and the nation of Israel specifically. It also describes the fall of man and how God brought about eventual reconciliation. Much of the Old Testament is symbolic in pointing towards the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus and new covenant with man.

### 4. What is the main story of the New Testament and why is it important?

The New Testament tells of the life, teachings, and sacrifice of Jesus. It tells how the promised Kingdom of God (the church) was brought about, how one is added to the church, and how we should live as citizens of God’s Kingdom.

**5. Read Matthew 16:13-20 and answer the following questions:**

- **How was apostolic authority given?**

By Jesus himself.

- **What did Jesus mean by loosing and binding on earth and in heaven?**

Whatever the apostles taught was considered truth by God and to be followed as if it were from God Himself.

- **What were the three principle elements underscoring why content was contained in the New Testament and how does this relate to apostolic authority?**

The three principle elements underscoring why content was contained in the New Testament are the authorship, value, and circulation of the various letters written by the apostles and/or those closely associated with them. Since these concepts originated with Jesus and were taught and sanctioned by the apostles, they became the standards of behavior for God's Kingdom on earth.

**6. Why is it necessary to have various translations of scripture?**

Scripture is written in the language of man. Our language changes over time as does meaning of various words. Additionally, some words in one language may have different or various meanings than in another language.

**7. Read Matthew 24:35 and answer the following questions:**

**What three reasons point to the inspiration of scripture?**

Its ability to survive, its uniqueness and fulfilled prophecy.



**Concerning scripture's ability to survive, what attacks have been made on scripture that you may be aware of?**

Answers will vary but look for answers such as science related, human reasoning related, or simple disbelief.

**Concerning scripture's uniqueness, how does scripture differ from other literary works over the centuries?**

Answers will vary but look for such concepts as agreement among scholars, its unity of message over the 66 books written over 1500 years by 40 different authors, and its applicability to every culture and every age.

**Concerning scripture's fulfillment of prophecy, how do they point to the inspiration of scripture?**

Many prophecies in scripture have been fulfilled as written to date. Other prophecies have yet to be fulfilled but expectations are that since prophecies have been fulfilled, those not fulfilled to date will be. These prophecies have been documented in secular and spiritual writings.

**8. How can you as a student use this to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance the concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provides clarity of the inspiration and validity of the Bible.

# Lesson #4 – Jesus Christ

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The focus of this lesson is to examine the person of Jesus Christ, the reason for our faith. It will examine Him as the central theme of scripture, Who He is, what some of the apostles tell us about Him and some of His key sayings about Himself. Teachers should review the relevant materials and have students review the materials before class.

This lesson is foundational for a follow-on lesson about the chronological life of Jesus. Consider using it as not only a lesson in this series, but a review of the future lesson.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand who Jesus is.
- **Feel:** Value the person of Jesus Christ in bringing about our reconciliation to God.
- **Do:** Use our growing knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ to strengthen our faith.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 4 of 7 – Jesus Christ)
- Lesson Notes
- Advanced Student Notes

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – Jesus as the Central Theme of the Bible

- 1.1 The Bible is about Jesus
- 1.2 Who is Jesus
- 1.3 Witness of the Apostles
- 1.4 The Testimony of Jesus

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### **1. Read Matthew 16:13 and answer yourself, “Who do you say Jesus is”?**

Although answers will vary, look for insights into student’s personal statements of faith or possible confusion.

### **2. In what ways has your view of Jesus changed from what you knew of Him to what you’ve learned of Him?**

Look for statements of deeper knowledge, greater love or awareness, or perhaps even no change. In cases of no change explore why and how we can be changed through greater knowledge of Jesus. Encourage all students to continue learning about Jesus so we can learn more of Him, grow in love for Him and follow His teachings.

### **3. Although the Old Testament does not mention the name of Jesus specifically, how is it about Jesus?**

Since man’s sin in the Garden of Eden, God has made a way for man to be reconciled to him. This was first spoken of in Genesis 3:15. God then promised Abraham (Abram) in Genesis 12:1-2 that he would bless his family so he could be a blessing to others. This established Israel as the people through whom Jesus would eventually come into the world. Throughout the Old Testament we read prophecies about the eventual coming of the Messiah. We see how God used symbolic ceremonies and other events to illustrate how Jesus would be a sacrifice for man’s sin. These are just some of the ways in which the various books of the Old Testament point to the coming of Jesus as our Savior.

#### **4. What is the value of the four gospel accounts to us regarding Jesus?**

They provide us the biography of the life of Jesus as well as His teachings.

#### **5. In addition to the four gospels, what is the value of the rest of the New Testament regarding Jesus?**

In these we learn more about the teachings of Jesus and how to apply them as citizens in God's Kingdom.

#### **6. What is the value to us of having the apostles write about Jesus?**

These men were eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus and given special insights into the His teachings. Through their writings we learn what we need to be faithful servants of Jesus.

#### **7. Why is the apostle Thomas referred to as the “doubting” apostle? Do you agree or disagree with this title?**

Answers will vary. Some will agree because even in the face of the statements from the others, he refused to believe. Some will disagree understanding that Thomas was justified in his doubts. Note also that all of the apostles fled at the arrest of Jesus except perhaps John. John was also the only apostle we learn of at the cross during the crucifixion of Jesus. So it might be a bit unfair to single Thomas out as a doubter when in fact they, and us at times, are doubters.

## **8. What about Paul makes him a credible and effective witness for Jesus?**

Paul first had a personal encounter with Jesus on the way to Damascus in Acts 9. This occurred when Paul was hostile to anyone professing Jesus as the Messiah. This dramatic encounter transformed Paul to a devout follower of Jesus. His faith was reinforced continually by his growing knowledge of Jesus as the Messiah. Paul also received special insight into his role as an apostle by the Holy Spirit on occasions as well as various visions from Jesus. Paul is also consistent with his testimony and teachings of Jesus.

## **9. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7. What is the treasure Paul speaks of?**

We have the teachings of Jesus and the ways of salvation.

## **10. What is the consistency between the encounter with Jesus by the Samaritan Woman in John 4:25-26, Peter's confession of who Jesus was in Matthew 16:15-17, and the final words of Jesus to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 and John 14:6?**

In these three events Jesus states that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, and has all authority from God. As such, He truly is the Son of God, our King, and our Savior. And as He stated in John 14:6, He is the only way in which we can come to God.

## **11. How can you as a student use this to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance of the concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provide clarity of the inspiration and validity of the Bible.

# Lesson #5 – Salvation

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The focus of this lesson is to examine salvation as a gracious gift from God. Teachers should review the relevant materials and have students review the materials before class.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand salvation as taught in the Bible.
- **Feel:** Value the teachings of Jesus regarding salvation.
- **Do:** Demonstrate knowledge of salvation as taught in the Bible by stating the elements and one associated biblical reference.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 5 of 7 - Salvation)
- Lesson Notes
- Advanced Student Notes

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – Salvation

- 1.1 What major religions of the world teach regarding salvation
- 1.2 What the Bible teaches about Christian salvation
- 1.3 The basis of salvation
- 1.4 Who can become a Christian

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### 1. Why do we feel salvation is necessary?

Answers will vary but look for answers like those in the student text such as: the flawed condition of man, the subordinate relationship between man and God, an need in man to look forward to something beyond this life.

### 2. What do major religions of the world teach regarding salvation?

All major religion of the world have teachings regarding some form of salvation. The general teaching is that man performs some sort of activity or ongoing activities recognized by the deity and are awarded salvation accordingly.

### 3. What is meant by the concept that humans are flawed?

God did not create us as sinful, but we are created with the gift of choice. Unfortunately, we do not always make good choices. Some of our choices are intentional disobedience to our knowledge of God’s will. As a result of those sins and the condemnation they incur we are in need of salvation which we cannot provide for ourselves.

### 4. Read Romans 5:6-11. Summarize in your own words what this passage says as to the solution to human’s sinful condition?

Look for responses that include the sacrifice of Jesus as a perfect sacrifice. This sacrifice allows us to be reconciled to God.

## **5. What is meant by “reconciled to God”?**

To be reconciled to God means that our relationship with God is brought back into balance.

## **6. How does God offer salvation to humans?**

We are offered salvation by the grace of God through faith (Ephesians 2:6-8). It cannot be achieved through our human efforts but only through the vicarious atoning sacrifice of Jesus. God did not have to offer us salvation. That is the nature of grace. It is now upon humans to believe (faith) and act upon that belief by obeying God’s will as outlined in scripture.

## **7. Scripture outlines mankind’s response of faith to God’s offer of salvation. What are these and list at least one scripture associated with the individual elements.**

- Hear
- Believe
- Confess
- Repent
- Be baptized
- Life according to the teachings of Jesus

Answers will vary but look for references from the New Testament. New Christians or those seeking to learn about salvation may have difficulty finding these so be ready to offer assistance.



## **8. Why is it not necessary to become extensively knowledgeable about the Bible before a person can become a Christian?**

Although knowledge of the Bible is important and we should seek to understand all we can about it, our salvation is not based on having deep knowledge of God and the Bible. The most important step in salvation is to obey God's will as outlined in scripture. Once we know and obey that, God adds us to His Kingdom. We then begin a life-long process of growing spiritually. We have different capacities to learn so it is important to be saved and then begin the process of growth. God's grace allows us to grow as He has enabled us to do.

## **9. How can you as a student use this to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance the concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provide clarity of the inspiration and validity of the Bible.

# Lesson #6 – The Church

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The focus of this lesson is to examine the New Testament church found in scripture. Additional information is provided on various misunderstandings. Teachers should review the relevant materials and have students review the materials before class.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Distinguish between the New Testament Church and the world's view of church.
- **Feel:** Value the importance of the New Testament Church in helping Christians remain faithful and grow spiritually.
- **Do:** Make participation in the Christian community a priority.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 6 of 7 – The Church)
- Lesson Notes
- Advanced Student Notes

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – The Church

- 1.1 Misconceptions
- 1.2 The Church in the Bible
- 1.3 The imagery of the Church

### 2.0 – Church types

- 2.1 Unbiblical foundation
- 2.2 Lack of agreement on the meaning of the Bible
- 2.3 The New Testament Church.

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### **1. What was your perception of the church in the past and how do you perceive it now? If it changed, why?**

Answers will vary but look for agreement with some of the misconceptions spoken of in the lesson. If there has been a change, look for responses based on biblical information. If there has not been a change, encourage students to discuss what would be a change they would look for.

### **2. Why have we developed the misperception that the “church” is a building?**

Many people associate church with a location rather than a body of believers. This has many reasons, but it is generally a lack of knowledge about what church is and how it is to function based on the Bible.

### **3. Defend this statement. All churches are not the same.**

Look for responses that there are many churches throughout the world that claim to be the “right” church or that it doesn’t matter what church you go to so long as it worships Jehovah God. But any church claiming to be based on biblical standards must follow the Bible in all respects. Any church founded by a man is inherently not biblical since Jesus is the founder and Lord of the Church, and as such provides the proper instructions as to the form and function of His church.

### **4. What function of the church means the most to you, and why?**

Answers will vary but look for responses that indicate how the church meets a human need as well as a spiritual need. Reinforce the concept that this is part of the purpose of the church. It is why the statement in Hebrews 10:25 is important for Christians.

**5. Read Psalm 122:1 and Hebrews 10:25. What spirit or attitude would a person possess to believe these statements and how can we develop it in ourselves?**

Answers will vary. Look for responses such as a better understanding of the importance and purpose of church activities, an awareness of God's will about our attendance, and the value we receive from staying connected as a community of believers.

**6. What makes a church a New Testament church?**

Look for responses that center on how the church is founded, patterned and functions according to biblical standards and not man's standards.

**7. What is the difference between "non-denominational" and "pre-denominational"?**

Non-denominational refers to a church that is not tied to any specific denomination. Pre-denominational refers to a church that existed before denominations began. As such, the church found in the Bible is pre-denominational since denominations began many centuries later. We are attempting to restore the pre-denominational church established in Acts 2 in the modern age.

**8. What church did Peter, Paul, and the other apostles and first century Christians belong to?**

They belonged to the church established in Acts 2. They did not belong to any denomination founded by man.

**9. How can you as a student use this to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance the concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provide clarity of the inspiration and validity of the Bible.



# Lesson #7 – The Christian Lifestyle

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The focus of this lesson is to examine the Christian lifestyle. This lesson is intended not only to explain the Christian lifestyle but also to encourage all to internalize the teachings of Jesus and the apostles so that it becomes who they are and how they are seen by others.

## Student Learning Outcomes

- **Know:** Understand that the teachings of Jesus form the foundation of our Christian lifestyle.
- **Feel:** Value the teachings of Jesus regarding as the foundation of our lifestyle.
- **Do:** Apply the teachings of Jesus as we grow spiritually.

## Support

- Text – Christianity for Beginners, Mike Mazzalongo (2014)
- Video – Christianity for Beginners – (Lesson 7 of 7 – The Christian Lifestyle)
- Lesson Notes
- Advanced Student Notes

## Body of the Lesson

### 1.0 – The Christian Lifestyle

- 1.1 Misconceptions about the Christian lifestyle
- 1.2 The true Christian lifestyle
- 1.3 Christians follow Jesus everyday

## Discussion Questions

Below are suggested questions to use during the guided discussion portion of the lesson. There are also suggested responses to questions to help students grasp the various concepts. These are provided to assist the discussion and are not considered as a “right or wrong” response.

### **1. Has your perception of the Christian lifestyle changed? If so, why?**

Look for responses that indicate misperceptions and how it has changed. As to why, look for indicators that point towards individuals striving to align their lifestyle with the commands and principles found in scripture. A good follow-up or substitute question here might be, “If someone asked you to explain what the Christian lifestyle was, what would you tell him or her?”

### **2. Why is it important for Christians to pay attention to how they live?**

There will be many responses but here are some suggestions to include if students do not bring them up. As we live in our communities, we are the representatives of Christ, His church and fellow Christians. Not making the effort to live pure lives brings shame upon Christ and drives others away from Him. Furthermore, puts our soul in jeopardy of continuing in sin. We are called to come out of the world and to be a light showing others the way to Christ. One way we do that is how we live our lives from day to day. How we live also shows obedience to Christ as we follow His teachings.

### **3. All of us are influenced by something as we make decisions each day. What is different about the influences of a Christian as compared to influences of the world?**

One of the faith responses to the offer of salvation is a confession that Jesus is our Lord and Savior. We also pledge to turn from our former life and dedicate ourselves to following the teachings of Jesus. This is what we understand as the repentance process. We look to Jesus and His disciples (followers) to gain insights into how He wants us to live. Those who do not follow Jesus will look to the world’s influences for guidance. Although there may be many good influences in the world, there are also many harmful ones. It is also true that unless a person is living as a child of God then the efforts he or she makes are of no eternal value.

**4. Motivation is the manifestation of our inner drive or desire. What should motivate a Christian as he or she lives the Christian lifestyle?**

Answers will vary but look for those that indicate a person is trying to understand and put into their lives the teachings of Jesus. Also note that as we grow into spiritual maturity we will focus less and less on self and more and more on what Jesus desires of us.

**5. Read Galatians 3:26-27. What does Paul mean by “clothed yourselves with Christ?”**

How does this influence how others see us? Some versions use “Put on Christ”. It is another way of saying that we have completely covered ourselves with the influences and practices of Christ. When others see us, they should see Christ.

**6. Read Romans 12:1-2. What should be the Christian’s attitude be towards their view of his or her life as a Christian?**

We should seek to grow spiritually (transform our lives) and to take a view of what our Lord wishes for us rather than what we want. We go from focus on self in a self-consumed view to one of sacrificing self for the will of God and to help bring others to know our Lord.

**7. In Romans 12:1-2, Paul uses the expression, “good and acceptable, and perfect.” What is meant by the word “perfect?”**

Perfect means complete, not necessarily without flaw. We know that we do not live a perfect life meaning we fail to live up to the standards of perfection that our Lord presents to us. God does not demand perfection from us, but he does demand faithfulness. One of the keys to the Christian lifestyle is making the effort towards perfect obedience. We know we cannot do this by ourselves. In 1 John 1:5-9 we learn that when we admit our sins to God and live the Christian lifestyle to the best of our ability, then the blood that Jesus shed continues to cleanse us. To “cleanse” means that God forgives our sins and sees us as faithful. This is one of the most important blessings we share as Christians.



**8. What are some practical ways in which we can live the Christian lifestyle each day?**

Answers will vary but look for specific responses, not general statements. For example, we can begin each day with prayer asking our Lord to help us make wise decisions based on His will. We need to study each day the teachings of Christ and look for opportunities to demonstrate those teachings. A follow-up question here might be to ask for a specific example of Jesus' teachings and how we can put this into practice in our lives. A good review of the teachings from the Sermon on the Mount will help here. We can look for opportunities to share our faith and encourage others to learn of Jesus. This helps us to remain focused on living as our Lord has asked us to.

**9. What does this statement mean to you? "There is no such thing as a solo-Christian."**

The Christian lifestyle is one that is lived and shared by other Christians. As a Christian we are part of a community of believers that share the bonds of family with our heavenly Father, our Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Many times, we feel we are all alone in our efforts to live faithfully. We must always remember we are part of something greater and grander than simply the world around us.

**10. How can you as a student use this to grow spiritually and help others come into a relationship with Jesus?**

Look for responses that indicate an acceptance of the concepts presented in this lesson and other sources. Other indicators may include responses such as the scope and depth of the information provide clarity of the inspiration and validity of the Bible.



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