

Five Important Steps Toward a Normal Christian Life

STEP #1. Honesty About the Character of the Normal Christian Life.

1. A provisional description of the Christian life.

- A. The Christian life is an experience of enjoyable fellowship with God, John 15:11; 16:20-24; 17:13; Romans 14:17; 15:13; Galatians 5:22,23; I John 1:4.
- B. The Christian life is an experience of progressive deliverance from the power of sin and Satan, Matthew 1:21; Romans 6:16-18,22; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 1:4; I Peter 1:22; 5:8,9.
- C. The Christian life is an experience of progressive enablement to live a holy life and be an effective witness, Romans 6:16-18,22; 12:1,2; I Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12-16; II Peter 1:3,4.

Observation: Living this kind of life will keep us from yielding to temptation; it will motivate us to read the Bible, pray, and serve God; it will deliver us from pretense; and it will cause people to understand that we are genuine Christians.

2. Provisional definitions of Christianity.

A. Christianity is, or revolves around, a Person – Jesus Christ.

1. The Biblical evidence.

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- a. Deut. 6:4,5 – ". . . *The Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love. . .*"
- b. Jeremiah 2:13 – ". . . *they have forsaken Me . . .*"
- c. Matt. 11:28 – ". . . *come unto Me . . .*"
- d. John 1:12 – "*But as many as received Him . . .*"
- e. John 8:12 – "*Then spake Jesus . . . I am the Light of the world . . .*"
- f. John 14:6 – "*Jesus saith unto them, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life . . .*"
- g. Ephesians 1:17 – ". . . *in the knowledge of Him . . .*"
- h. Philippians 3:10 – "*That I may know Him . . .*"
- i. Colossians 1:27 – ". . . *Christ in you, the hope of glory..*"

2. The doctrinal evidence.

- a. Cf. Faith – God is its object – Acts 16:33.
- b. Cf. Sin – a transgression against God – Psalm 51:4.
- c. Cf. Salvation – we are complete in Him – Col. 2:10.
- d. Cf. Sanctification – He is our holiness – I Cor. 1:30.
- e. Cf. Knowledge – He is the truth – John 14:6.
- f. Cf. Prayer – we pray in His Name – John 15:16.
- g. Cf. Witnessing – we witness to Him – Acts 1:8.
- h. Cf. Peace – He is our peace – Ephesians 2:14.
- i. Cf. Wisdom – Jesus Christ is our wisdom – I Cor. 1:24.
- j. Cf. Power – Jesus Christ is our power – I Cor. 1:24.
- k. Cf. Righteousness – Jesus Christ is our righteousness – I Corinthians 1:30.

3. Warning: Christianity may be perverted into a form of spiritual idolatry.

- a. We may not pervert Christianity by substituting the Church for the Person of Jesus Christ – When we do so we miss the truth that He is the Head of the Church, Ephesians 1:22. Spirituality is not automatically insured by Church attendance.
- b. We may not pervert Christianity by substituting the Written Word for the Person of Jesus Christ – when we do so we miss the truth that He is the Living Word, John 1:14; Rev. 19:13. Spirituality is not automatically insured by reading the Bible.
- c. We may not pervert Christianity by substituting Christian Service for the Person of Jesus Christ – when we do so we miss the truth that He is the Lord of the Harvest Field, Matt. 9:38. Spirituality is not automatically insured by Christian Service.
- d. We may not pervert Christianity by substituting Christian Experience for the Person of Jesus Christ – when we do so we miss the truth that He is our Sanctification, I Cor. 1:30. Spirituality is not automatically insured by an emotional/religious experience.
- e. We may not pervert Christianity by substituting a List of Rules for the Person of Jesus Christ – when we do so we miss the truth that He is our Lord, Luke 6:46. Spirituality is not automatically insured by obeying "Do's" and "Don'ts."

B. Christianity is

Final Authority

Christendom

AUTHORITY

Jn. 8:32) Freedom – Harmony

Person Work Word

Disharmony – slavery (Jn. 8:34)

1. The authority in Christianity is found in the Person of Jesus Christ, His Work, and His Word. These three foundation stones structure and determine the content of Christianity, I Peter 1:15, 16; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Isaiah 8:20; II Timothy 3:16.
2. To alter the foundation of Christianity is to destroy its very nature. We may not deny the deity of Jesus Christ, the historical character of the atonement, nor the inspiration and final authority of the scripture.
3. One important question for the Christian is whether or not he has accepted the authority of Christianity. The evidence of such an acceptance would be seen in his involvement with the Person of Jesus Christ, with His work, and with His Word.
 - a. Evidence of involvement with Jesus Christ:
 - fellowship (I Cor. 1:9);
 - worship (John 4:23, 24); and
 - witnessing (Acts 1:8).
 - b. Evidence of involvement with the Work of Jesus Christ: daily cleansing from the power of sin through the Crucifixion (Romans 6:18a); daily enablement to live virtuously through the Resurrection (Romans 6:18b); daily victory over Satan through the Ascension (Ephesians 1:15-23); daily anointing by the Holy Spirit through Pentecost (Ephesians 5:18).
 - c. Evidence of involvement with the Word of Jesus Christ:
 - seeking it (I Peter 2:2); mixing it with faith (Hebrews 4:1-3);
 - obeying it in love (John 14:15; I John 5:3).

STEP #2. Honesty About the Barriers to a Normal Christian Life.

Observations: It is possible, with the best of intentions, to be mistaken in some important area of belief. Such mistakes almost always produce incorrect action. These mistakes become barriers to a successful Christian life.

If we are to be successful Christians we must honestly search out and destroy these barriers. God can only deliver us through Truth.

Satan, our enemy, is called a Hinderer and a Liar, I Thessalonians 2:18; John 8:44.

1. That man, and even the Christian, is unimportant to God.
Cf. Deuteronomy 4:20; 7:6,7; 14:2; 26:18,19; 28:9; 29:13; 32:9, Psalm 33:12; Isaiah 43:1,7,21; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:18; Colossians 1:16; Revelations 4:11.
2. That there are some "second-rate" Christians. God has not given Himself equally to all believers for a successful daily life.
Cf. Matthew 11:28-30; John 7:37-39; 15:1-10; Romans 8:13-17; I Corinthians. 1:24,30; Ephesians 1:3, 17-23; II Peter 1:3,4.
3. That there is a hierarchy of calling in the church. Only the clergy are really called. If you don't feel called then you're not! Therefore, I am not as obligated to obey God.
Cf. Romans 8:28,29; I Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 1:18; 4:4; Philippians 3:14; I Thessalonians 4:7; II Timothy 1:9; Hebrews 3:1; I Peter 2:9.
4. That prayer and a knowledge of the Bible are not necessary to fulfill God's will.
Cf. Matthew 6:10; Colossians 4:12; Mark 11:24; Phil. 4:6,7; John 16:24; Romans 15:30-32; Hebrews 4:1-3; I Peter 2:2.
5. That inner thoughts and meditation can be a substitute for prayer.
Cf. Matthew 6:6-13; 7:7; Luke 18:1; I John 5:13,14.
6. That knowledge is unimportant for faith and continual growth.
Cf. Luke 19:42-44; John 5:24; Romans 6:16-18; 19:17; Hebrews 4:1-3; 11:1-40.
7. That religious feelings are a genuine criteria. "If I don't feel guilty then I'm not."
Cf. Jeremiah 8:5-12; Malachi 3:7; Matthew 3:7-9; 23:1-33; Acts 26:9; James 1:22-24.

8. That since I'm a Christian I no longer need the Bible. I have the truth within me,
Cf. John 17:17,19; II Cor. 7:1; Hebrews 4:1-3; II Peter 3:18.
9. That the commandments of God are only "good advice." "I don't have to do anything."
Cf. Jeremiah 7:21-28; 13:1-11; Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:4-49; I John 2:3-5; 3:4,9; 5:3.
10. That since I am a Christian I now know that truth and therefore no longer resist God and His will for my life.
Cf. Acts 5:1-11; Ephesians 4:17-32; Colossians 3:1-17; II Timothy 2:25,26.
11. That sanctification is not in the present tense. "I don't have to do anything now."
Cf. II Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:22-32; Colossians 3:1-17; Hebrews 3:7-19; I Peter 1:13-25.
12. That surrendering to God results in passivity of the will and intellect.
Cf. Romans 12:1-3; Ephesians 4:22-32; Colossians 3:1-17; Philippians 3:13,14; Hebrews 11.
13. That faith is unimportant in sanctification - it is the work of God!
Cf. Romans 14:23; 15:13; Hebrews 4:1-11; 11:6; I Peter 1:6-8.
14. That faith is a feeling.
Cf. Matthew 8:5-10; Romans 4:17-24; Hebrews 11:1-40.
15. That faith and love can be separated.
Cf. I Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:6; I Thessalonians 1:3; 3:6; I Timothy 1:5.
16. That faith and love can exist without works.
Cf. John 14:15,21,23; James 4:17-20; I John 5:3; II John 6.
17. That God must break me with conviction before I can act.
Cf. Jeremiah 5:3; 6:19; 7:13,14,23-28; 13:10,11; 14:10-12; Romans 10:17; II Corinthians 7:1.
18. That we can sanctify ourselves.
Cf. John 15:5; Romans 6:16-18; 7:15-25; 8:13,14; II Peter 1:3.
19. That sanctification has to do with my actions but not with me as a person.
Cf. Mark 7:20-23; 8:34; II Corinthians 7:1; Philippians 3:10; II Timothy 2:25; James 4:4.

20. That physical sins are worse than spiritual sins.
Cf. Matthew 11:20-24; 22:34-40; 23:23; I Samuel 15:22,23;
John 19:11; Romans 13:14; Ephesians 6:16; Colossians 3:14;
Hebrews 11:6; I Peter 4:8.
21. That there is no difference between sins of ignorance, weakness,
and presumption.
Cf. Leviticus 4:2,13,22,27; 5:15-19; Numbers 15:30,31;
Psalm 19:13; Matthew 11:20-24; Matthew 23:14; John 19:11.
22. That "I can continue to pretend, cheat, and live a 'double life'
- if I'm sincere in acknowledging it."
Cf. Mark 7:18-23; Colossians 3:5-10; I Thessalonians 4:1-7;
I John 2:3-5; Jeremiah 2:13; 7:14-16; Hosea 13:9; James 1:22.
23. That the believer can knowingly sin, confess it, and be totally
free from its effects.
Cf. Proverbs 6:27,28; 14:14; Jeremiah 2:19; 4:18; 17:10;
I Corinthians 3:11-15; II Corinthians 5:10.
24. That when I sin against God I'm back at zero and must start all
over again.
Cf. John 10:28,29; 12:24; 15:1-11; Romans 8:31-39;
I Corinthians 12:13-26.
25. That we can go from failure to perfection immediately.
Cf. Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 3:12-14; Hebrews 5:12-14;
I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18.
26. That Christianity will work in the lives of other people - but
not in mine.
Cf. Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:3; II Peter 1:3.

And now, list those hindrances which keep you from enjoying the
Lord.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

STEP # 3. Honesty About the Old and New Nature In the Normal Christian Life

1. The old nature and the normal Christian life.

A. The description of the old nature and its sinful effects.

- 1) The old nature defiles the believer and is the source of evil thoughts, Mark 7:18-23.
- 2) The old nature hinders, weakens, and enslaves the believer, Romans 7:15-24.
- 3) The old nature is a contradictory element in the believer, Galatians 3:17.
- 4) The old nature is a source of sinful actions in the believer, Galatians 5:19-21.

B. The provision of God concerning the old nature.

1) The provision of the Crucifixion.

- a. Jesus Christ died representing our sinful nature, Romans 6:1-10.
- b. The believer died to sin in his Representative, Romans 6:2-5,8; Galatians 2:20
- c. Through the atonement Jesus Christ has become our sanctification, I Corinthians 1:30.

2) The provision in the Holy Spirit.

- a. The Holy Spirit has been sent to glorify Jesus Christ in the believer, John 16:14.
- b. The Holy Spirit has been sent to apply the work of the Crucifixion in the daily life of the believer, Romans 8:12-14.

C. The commandment of God concerning the old nature.

- 1) We are commanded to "put off the old man," Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9.
- 2) We are exhorted to claim the provision of God, Rom. 6:11-13.

D. The instruction of God concerning the old nature.

- 1) Daily count upon the provision of God, Romans 6:11.
- 2) Daily choose to confess and forsake the besetting sin, Romans 6:12.
- 3) Daily choose to obey and trust God for deliverance, Romans 6:13.
(The principle illustrated: Romans 6:17,18; I John 1:9).

E. The promise of God concerning the old nature.

- 1) The promise of deliverance, Romans 6:14.
- 2) The promise of cleansing, I John 1:9.

2. The new nature and the normal Christian life.

A. The description of the new nature and its beneficial effects.

- 1) The new nature has its source in the work of Jesus Christ and results in a transformation of character and life, II Corinthians 5:17.
- 2) The new nature is the key for personal assurance of salvation and the key to a successful Christian life – not Jewish religion (ceremonialism or legalism) nor non-Jewish religion (asceticism or emotionalism), Galatians 6:15.
- 3) The new nature is the source of righteousness and genuine holiness. The Christian, therefore, has the ability to live in righteousness and holiness, Ephesians 4:24.
- 4) The new nature is the source of knowledge. The Christian, therefore, has the ability to know God and the world, Colossians 3:10.
- 5) The new nature is the inner source of freedom from lust and its resultant corruption. The Christian, therefore, has the ability to make the right decisions and live a holy life, II Peter 1:4.

B. The provision of God concerning the new nature.

- 1) The provision in the Resurrection.
 - a. Jesus Christ represented the believer in His Resurrection, Romans 6:4,5.
 - b. In the Resurrection He has made the provision for the new nature, I Peter 1:3.
 - c. Through the atonement Jesus Christ has become our sanctification, I Corinthians 1:30.
- 2) The provision in the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The Holy Spirit has been sent to glorify Jesus Christ in the believer, John 16:14.
 - b. The Holy Spirit has been sent to apply the work of the Resurrection in the believer's daily life, Romans 8:12-14.

C. The commandment of God concerning the new nature.

- 1) We are commanded to "put on the new man," Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10.
- 2) We are exhorted to claim the provision of God, Romans 6:11-13; Philipians 3:10.

D. The instruction of God concerning the new nature.

- 1) Daily count upon the provision of God, Romans 6:11.
- 2) Daily choose to live above sin and in the power of the new nature, Romans 6:12.

3) Daily choose to obey God and trust Him for enablement,
Romans 6:13.

(The principle illustrated: Romans 6:17,18).

E. The promise of God concerning the new nature.

The promise of an inner, spiritual enablement so that the
Christian life may be lived successfully, Rom. 6:4,5;
Ephesians 2:10.

STEP # 4. Honesty About the Holy Spirit and the Enemy in the Normal Christian Life.

1. The Holy Spirit and the normal Christian life.

(Joel 2:28,29; John 7:37-39; 14:16-18; 15:26-27; 16:7-12; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-2;33)

A. The description of God's provision in the Holy Spirit.

- 1) The believer is born again by the Holy Spirit, John 3:3,5; Romans 8:9; Titus 3:5.
- 2) The believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19,20.
- 3) The believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:30; II Corinthians 1:22.
- 4) The believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:4,5; I Corinthians 12:13.
- 5) The believer is gifted by the Holy Spirit, I Corinthians 12; Ephesians 4:7-16.
- 6) The believer is anointed by the Holy Spirit, I John 2:20,27.

B. The promise in God's provision of the Holy Spirit.

(This is what will happen in our lives when we learn how to give Jesus Christ His rightful place in our lives and live day by day continually filled with the Holy Spirit.)

- 1) The promise of divine enablement for the enjoyment of spiritual things. Romans 14:17; 15:13; Galatians 5:22,23.
- 2) The promise of divine enablement for witnessing. John 7:37-39; 15:26,27; Acts 1:0; 9:31; 13:2,4; 20:28; Romans 15:19; II Corinthians 3:3; I Thessalonians 1:5.
- 3) The promise of divine enablement for a successful prayer life. Romans 8:26; Ephesians 6:18; Jude 20.
- 4) The promise of divine enablement for guidance. John 16:13; Acts 15:28; Acts 16:6; 20:23; Romans 8:14.
- 5) The promise of divine enablement for a correct understanding of Scripture. John 16:12-15; I John 2:20,27.
- 6) The promise of divine enablement for an understanding of salvation. Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:6; I John 3:24.
- 7) The promise of divine enablement for sanctification. John 16:14,15; Romans 8:13,14; Galatians 5:16-18; Ephesians 5:9.

C. The exhortation concerning the Holy Spirit, Ephesians 5:18.

1) The conditions to be met in fulfilling this exhortation.

- a. We must daily choose to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by living in harmony with His indwelling presence, I Corinthians 6:19,20.
 - 1. He is the "Holy Spirit" – we must practice holiness in daily life.
 - 2. He is the "Comforter" – we must exercise faith in daily life.
 - 3. He is the "Spirit of Truth" – we must be honest in daily life and seek to understand and practice the Truth.
- b. We must daily choose to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His purpose to glorify Jesus Christ in and through our lives. This is done by giving Jesus Christ, through faith and love, His rightful place in our daily life.
- c. We must daily choose to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His work of personal sanctification. He seeks to apply the work of Jesus Christ to our character and practice.
 - 1. Because of the Crucifixion – we must "put off the Old Man," Ephesians 4:22. (This means confessing and rejecting the sins of selfishness, lust, etc.)
 - 2. Because of the Resurrection – we must "put on the New Man," Ephesians 4:24. (This means choosing and manifesting the virtues of love, purity, etc.)
 - 3. Because of the Ascension – we must "resist the Devil," Eph. 4:27. (This means confessing and rejecting all "ground" given to Satan.)

2) The Promise of God in regard to this exhortation, Galatians 5:22,23.

- a. There will be love – instead of selfishness.
- b. There will be joy – instead of self-pity,
- c. There will be peace – instead of despair,
- d. There will be longsuffering – instead of impatience,
- e. There will be gentleness -- instead of irritability,
- f. There will be goodness – instead of malice,
- g. There will be faithfulness – instead of unfaithfulness,
- h. There will be meekness – instead of dogmatism.
- i. There will be self-control – instead of irrational compulsiveness.

3) An illustration of this exhortation in daily practice,
John 7:37-39.

a. The conditions to be met.

1. "Thirst," - there must be a sincere desire.
2. "Come unto Me," - our relationship with Jesus Christ determines our relationship with the Holy Spirit. We must give Jesus Christ first place.
3. "Drink," - the actual involvement by faith and love in receiving help.
4. "Believing on Me," - the expression of faith and love in practice. It is submitting to God through His Word and putting the Word of God into actual practice in loving dependence on God.

b. The promise - "rivers of living water."

2. The Enemy and the normal Christian life

A. Satan and the need of deliverance.

1) Important passages: Genesis 3:1-5; Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-19; Zechariah 3:1-5; Matthew 4:1-11; 25:31; Ephesians 1:15-2:6; II Corinthians 11:3,13-15; Ephesians 6:10-18; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14,15; I Peter 5:8,9; II Peter 2:4; I John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelations 12:9-11.

2) Descriptive titles of our Enemy.

a. Adversary -- I Peter 5:8; Zechariah 3:1.

His endeavor is to keep the believer from spiritual progress through physical sins (Luke 4:33); an over-emphasis on religious practice (Acts 5:1-11; II Cor. 2:10,11; 11:13-15; I Timothy 3:6,7), by temptation (I Thessalonians 3:5), hindrances (I Thessalonians 2:18), or deception (Revelations 12:9,10; Galatians 6:3; II Timothy 2:13; James 1:22,26; II Peter 2:13). Note the Biblical description of this activity (II Tim. 2:25,26).

b. Accuser - Revelation 12:10.

His endeavor here is to bring the believer under self-condemnation, as an "angel of light" he counterfeits the work of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of such subterfuge is a lack of clarity in what the believer has done and what he is to do about his "sin." False conviction, produced in the life of the Christian to hinder him, always lacks this two fold clarity.

c. Murderer and Liar – John 8:44.

His endeavor is to take life and pervert the truth. This began in the Garden of Eden (I Timothy 2:14; I John 3:12) and will continue until the final judgment (I Timothy 4:1).

3. Observation: The attack of the enemy often follows the pattern found in Genesis 3:1-5. He questions, (1) whether God has spoken, (2) the goodness of God, (3) the truthfulness of God's Word, (4) the motive of God, (5) the wisdom of man. Compare this attack with I John 2:15-17.

B. Satan and the provision of deliverance.

1. As the Last Adam, Jesus Christ triumphed in His Temptation – the very area where the First Adam failed (Matthew 4:1-11; Romans 5:12-19).
2. As our Representative, Jesus Christ defeated our Enemy in His Crucifixion (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14,15; I John 3:8). In His Exaltation our Savior was seated at the right hand of God in victory over Satan (Ephesians 1:19-23; 2:5,6; Hebrews 1:13; I Peter 3:22). This triumph has been imputed, given as delegated authority, to the believer.

C. Satan and the condition of deliverance.

1. In salvation the believer has been legally set free from Satan (Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13; Ephesians 2:1-3; II Corinthians 4:4).
2. In sanctification this freedom is to be maintained. The believer is exhorted to yield himself to God, resist the Devil (James 4:7; I Peter 5:8), not to give a "place" or a "foothold" to the enemy (Ephesians 4:27), and to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). In particular we are warned against:
 - a. The threat of hypocrisy, Acts 5:1-11.
 - b. The threat of judgmental suspicion, II Corinthians 2:1-11.
 - c. The threat of disobedience to the known will of God, Ephesians 4:17-23.
 - d. The threat of inconsistency, I Timothy 3:7.
 - e. The threat of pride, I Timothy 3:6.

3. To resist the Devil the believer must steadfastly reject, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the insinuations, accusations, and temptations of Satan, affirm the truthfulness of the Word of God,, live in obedience and fellowship with God, maintain the armor provided by God against Satan, and in particular utilize the Shield of Faith and the Sword of the Spirit whereby the representative work of Jesus Christ is brought into the believer's life and made his own (I Peter 5:8,9; Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:10-18).
4. In times of trial it is helpful for the Christian to put the principle of James 4:7 into aggressive prayer.

"Heavenly Father, I accept into ny life everything that comes from You, everything that is in harmony with the Cross, and everything that comes through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I reject, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, everything that does not come from You, everything that does not come to me in harmony with the Cross, and everything that is not the ministry of the Holy Spirit. I take the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as my protection. In the Name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

STEP # 5. Honesty About the Response of Faith and Love in the Normal Christian Life.

1. The response of faith and the normal Christian life.

A. The Biblical emphasis on faith.

Matthew 8:5-13	Romans 10:17	Colossians 1:29
Matthew 17:14-21	Galatians 5:6	Hebrews 4:1-4
Acts 3:16	Ephesians 2:8,9	Hebrews 11:1-13
Romans 4:17-24	Ephesians 6:16	I Peter 1:7
		I Peter 5:9

B. A tentative definition of faith.

Faith is the response of the total person, to God as a Person, in loving submission, trust, and obedience, in and through the Person of Jesus Christ as the Revelation of God and Redeemer of Mankind, Who as the Sovereign Lord offers Himself to the believer, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Scripture, as his daily sufficiency.

C. Observations concerning faith.

- 1) Faith is not a feeling - but a decision. It is a decision to take God at His Word and to act upon it. (Note the words denoting decision in Hebrews 11:4-11 and 11:24-28.)
- 2) Faith has readily discernable characteristics. A minimal list would include submission (to submit to God, His work, and His Word), the practice of obedience, and trust (dependence on God to fulfill His Word).
- 3) Faith has a Person as its object - God. Acts 16:33, 27:25.
- 4) Faith has a context - love. Galatians 5:6. For faith to "work" one must have genuine love. Love and faith are mutually dependent. This is why it is difficult to have genuine faith when one is out of fellowship with God.
- 5) Faith has a basis - the Scripture. Hebrews 4:1-3; John 17:17,19,20.

D. The steps in a decision of faith.

- 1) The basis is found in the Word of God, I John 1:9. (Often one has a need to exercise faith in regard to some specific sin. It is therefore necessary to learn how to make a decision of faith. The following steps illustrate such a decision.)

2) The individual steps.

- a. Confess it as a sin.
- b. Forsake it as a sin.
- c. Believe God that He will forgive and cleanse.
- d. Receive Christ as the specific cleansing and enablement.
- e. Believe God has given His Word and act upon it - live as a cleansed person.

3) The promised result; forgiveness, cleansing, and freedom.

2. The response of love and. the normal Christian life.

A. The importance of loving God.

- 1) It is the first commandment - Matthew 22:37-39.
- 2) It is the virtue to be sought above all - I Cor. 12:31; 13:13; Colossians 3:14.
- 3) It is a necessary requirement for exercising faith - Galatians 5:6.
- 4) It is an evidence of genuine sonship - John 13:34,35; I John 3:16-18.
- 5) It is inseparably related to obedience - John 14:15; 23,24; I John 5:3.

B. Comments on the nature or meaning of love.

- 1) Love to God is a response to His love for us - I John 4:19.
- 2) Love has a person as its object - Matthew 22:37-39. (This is true even when we love the world - we are loving ourselves!)
- 3) Love is a decision to recognize another person as a person and to give that person rightful place in one's life - Matthew 5:43,44; I Corinthians 13:4-7; Ephesians 5:28,29.
- 4) To love God is to recognize Him as the True and Living God and to give Him His rightful place in our lives.

God is Holiness - all irreverance and ungodliness must be rejected.

God is Love - all forms of selfishness must be rejected.

God is Truth - all dishonesty, lying, and hypocrisy must be rejected.

God is our Creator - all spurious goals must be rejected.

God is our Sanctification - all immaturity, unbelief must be rejected.

God is our Savior – all sins of omission and commission must be rejected.

God is the Head of the Church – all failure to be involved must be rejected.

God is the Lord of the Harvest – all failure to be a witness must be rejected.

God is the Sovereign Lord – all failure to obey must be rejected.

5) Love is an activity of complete self-surrender – Eph. 5:2; I John 3:16.

6) Love may or may not be accompanied by personal affection – Matthew 5:44.

7) Love seeks the good in the other person; it is doing the right – I John 3:16-18.

C. Suggestions for improving our love.

1) Confess every failure to love as the sin that it is and receive the cleansing from all aspects of selfishness – I John 1:9.

2) Make the necessary decisions of faith to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in bringing glory to Jesus Christ through the practice of the Scripture – Romans 5:5; John 16:14; Galatians 5:22; I John 5:3.