

How?

Study Notes
By Stuart Olyott

How?

Table of Contents

Sermon Title	Page
1. How to tell whether you are a Christian or not.....	3
2. How to tell others you have become a Christian.....	5
3. How to enjoy church.....	7
4. How to read the Bible.....	9
5. How to pray.....	11
6. How to know what is right.....	14
7. How to overcome temptation.....	16
8. How to please God.....	18
9. How to know God's will.....	20
10. How to serve God.....	22
11. How to win others.....	23
12. How to deal with worry.....	25
13. How to prepare for death.....	27

HOW?

1. How to tell whether you are a Christian or not

The aim of this message

1. Some people are sure they are Christians when they are not. This message aims to remove their false assurance.
2. Some people are true Christians, but are not sure that they are. This message aims to assure them.

A key text

- 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Prove (test) yourselves."
- The way to do this is by asking questions: How does God's Word describe a Christian? Does that description fit me?

A key principle

- Conversion is not something which **took** place, but which **takes** place.
- The 1st day of the Christian life is not different from the days that follow. What **took** place that day **takes** place every day afterwards.
- "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him." (Colossians 2:6).

The two rails on which is run the whole of the journey

- They are **repentance** and **faith**.
- This is how we begin the Christian life: Mark 1:14-15.
- And the same 2 features are found every day afterwards: Acts 20:18-21.
- If you are **not** repenting and believing today, you are **not** a Christian.
- If you **are** repenting and believing today, you **are** a Christian.

What repentance is

- **Not** confession of sin alone. Proverbs 28:13.
- **Not** remorse. 2 Corinthians 7:9-10.

- But turning **from** sin **to** God. Acts 3:19, 26:20.
- That is why Scripture often uses the word 'turn' instead of 'repent'.
- Acts 14:15, 26:18, 1 Thessalonians 1:9.
- A repentant person is determining to finish with sin, and to please God.

- Without such repentance, there is no salvation.
- Luke 13:1-5, 24:47, Acts 2:38-39, 3:19, 5:31, 11:18, 26:18, 2 Corinthians 7:10.

Repentance and faith always go together

- You can't have one without the other.

- **Faith** looks to Christ for salvation. But why does it want to be saved?
Because it wants to finish with sin. This is repentance!
- **Repentance** is turning from sin. But where does it turn? To Christ;
This is faith!

- Now compare Acts 3:19/4:4, 10:43/11:18, 17:30/17:34, 26:18/26:20.
- "Believe" means "repentantly believe".
- "Repent" means "believingly repent".
- One term includes the other.

- And **this** is what a Christian does, on the first day, and every day.
- Do you?????
- You now know whether you are a Christian or not.

Next Week: How to tell others you have become a Christian.

HOW?

2. How to tell others you have become a Christian

BAPTISM is the first duty of the Christian life. It is not primarily an act of witness. But its **effect** is to let others know you have become a believer.

What is baptism?

"Baptism is a sacrament¹ of the New Testament instituted by Jesus Christ², to be unto the person baptised a sign of his fellowship with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection;³ of his being ingrafted into Him;⁴ of remission of sins; and of his giving up himself unto God through Jesus Christ, to live and walk in newness of life."⁵

(Baptist Catechism: Q.97).

1. "A sacrament of the new covenant is a holy ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." (Baptist Catechism: Q.94).
2. Matthew 28:19.
3. Romans 6:3, Colossians 2:12.
4. Galatians 3:26-27.
5. Romans 6:4.

To whom is baptism to be administered?

"Baptism is to be administered to all those who credibly profess repentance towards God¹ and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ², and to none other."

(Baptist Catechism: Q.98).

1. Acts 2:38-41.
2. Mark 16:16, Acts 8:12. 8:36-37, 10:47-48.

Are the infants of such as are professing believers to be baptised?

"The infants of such as are professing believers are not to be baptised, because there is neither command¹ nor example² in the Holy Scriptures for their baptism."

(Spurgeon's Catechism: Q.77).

- 1a. Baptism does **not** replace circumcision. If it did, the "Council of Jerusalem" need never have been called (Acts 15), and Paul need not have written to the Galatians as he did.
- 1b. Even if children **are** in the covenant, this does not imply that they must be baptised. It is not the extent of the covenant that decides who will receive the covenant sign, but God's command.
- 2a. Household baptisms in the New Testament do not include any unbelievers or infants: Acts 16:15, 40, and 16:32-34, 1 Corinthians 1:16, 16:15.
- 2b. Many find in Iranaeus (180 AD) the first mention of infant baptism, but the passage can be otherwise understood. Tertullian (197 AD) contended against the rising practice of baptising children. Origen (died 254 AD) is supposed to have said that infant baptism was apostolic, but there is great doubt that he did so. There is no definite evidence of infant baptism being spoken of with approval before Cyprian, in 253 AD.

How is baptism rightly administered?

"Baptism is rightly administered by immersion¹, or dipping the whole body of the believer in water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, according to Christ's institution², and the practice of the apostles³, and not by sprinkling or pouring of water, or dipping some part of the body, after the tradition of men⁴. " (Baptist Catechism: 0.99).

- 1. "**Baptizo**, to dip, to immerse, to sink." (Sophocles' dictionary). "No modern Greek lexicons give any other meaning for **baptizo** than dip. A man today who argues that **baptizo** means to sprinkle or pour throws suspicion on his scholarship and is on the defensive" (A.T. Robertson).
- 2. Matthew 3:16, John 3:23.
- 3. Acts 8:38-39.
- 4. Immersion was the universal mode of baptism until the 13th century, and still is where Greek is spoken.

*"And now why are you waiting?
Arise and be baptised ..." (Acts 22:16).*

HOW?

3. How to enjoy church

Realise what the church is

- You are not the only one that the Lord has saved!
- In all centuries, the world over, there are saved people (the Church universal); and in this part of this city He has saved people (the local church).
- Because you and these others all belong to the Lord, you also belong to each other, like the branches of a vine (John15:1-8), the organs of a body (1 Corinthians12:14-27), the stones of a building (1 Peter 2:4-8), the sheep of a flock (Hebrews13:20, Acts 20:28), the members of a family (Hebrews10:21, Galatians6:10).
- You are not on your own: you belong to a group!

Realise what the church should do

- It is obvious from the illustrations above that it must **meet together**.
- Look at Matthew18:20, Acts 20:7, Hebrews10:25.
- As soon as a person is converted, he should be baptised and join himself fully to a local group of Christians - a church :-

To worship God (1 Peter 2:5)

- In listening to teaching, having fellowship, meeting around the Lord's Table, and by meetings for prayer (Acts 2:42, 1 Corinthians10:17).

To be helped and to help (1 Corinthians12:7).

- There are pastors & teachers to teach us (Ephesians4; 11-14).
- There are other elders to rule and watch over us (1 Timothy3:1-7).
- There are deacons to help us practically (1 Timothy 3:8 -13).
- There are gifts (spiritual & material) which we have, which will help others (Romans ch.12).
- There are measures of discipline to help us persevere (2 Thessalonians3: 6f).

To serve God with others (Ephesians3; 10)

- Bearing a witness to the truth (1 Timothy3:14-16).
- Striving together in prayer (Romans 15:30).
- Sending out & supporting missionaries (Acts 13:1-4).
- Proclaiming the gospel locally (1 Thessalonians1:8).

Realise what the church requires

- Fellowship is not automatic - it must be maintained (Ephesians 4: 3).
- The key words are **love** and **forgiveness**.
- **Don't** gossip: condemn: be touchy: make mountains out of molehills: ignore anybody: be a passenger: look for the limelight.
- **Do** seek God's mill, not your own: be slow to speak, slow to anger: pray for those you can't stand: **work** for harmony: put your arms round those who fall: look for people you can help; pull your weight (remember Somebody, Everybody, Anybody and Nobody!)

Realise that there is a church within the church

- There are **lukewarm** Christians (Revelation 3:14-22) - who attend when it suits them: who put other things first (often good things): who have an axe to grind.
- And there are **red-hot** Christians; Christ is all in all to them.
- Be friendly with the lukewarm, but do not copy **anything** they do.
- Be friends with the red-hot - Proverbs 13:20!!

Note: The prayer-meeting is a good thermometer, and a fairly accurate indication of a person's spiritual temperature.

Realise that it is up to you

- Come - as often as you can.
- Come prepared - did you think to pray?
- Come prepared to give - yourself, your service, your money.
- Come early - lateness which can be avoided is sin.
- Come with others - and go home with them too!

HOW?

4. How to read the Bible

Remember what the Bible is and you'll **want** to read it

It is the word of **God**: only there do we learn what to believe concerning Him, and what He requires from us.

We know it is the word of God because:

- Its prophecies come true (Micah 5:2, Is.7:14, Psalms 22:18).
- Although it is 66 books, it speaks as one book.
- It teaches truths beyond our understanding.
- It has withstood all attacks.
- Of its influence; and power to change lives.
- There is no other way to explain its origin.

But most of all, we know because of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit:

- Christians see things others can't. 1 Corinthians 2:10ff.
- They recognise God's word on hearing it. 1 Thessalonians 2:23.
- They thus believe what God's word says about itself: 2 Peter 1:21, 2 Timothy 3:16.
- They therefore really love the Scriptures. Psalms 119:97-104.

The **whole** of the Bible is the word of God.

The person who believes it has something to live by - and die by!

Remember how the early Christians got to know the Bible

There were no printed Bibles; few people had handwritten copies; many early Christians could not read; there were no Bible study aids - so private Bible study was largely unknown!

Yet they still became mighty in the Scriptures! –

- They listened to the apostles (Acts 2:42);
- They paid attention to their teachers (Acts 13:1, Ephesians 4:11);
- They were instructed by their elders (1 Timothy 3:2, 5:17).

The key word is **together**.

Their knowledge of the Scriptures was the result of their **church** life.
A proper church life is infinitely more important than all the private Bible study that you can do (which is why we studied 'How to enjoy church' before we came to this subject).
But if you **can** study the Bible on your own as well - so much the better!

Study the Bible on your own

"At a chosen time each day
Read your Bible while you may;
Do not start until you pray.
Ask : "what does this passage say?"
Look for Him who is the Way,
Find a lesson for today;
Pray again without delay."

To get you going:

"Read Mark Learn" (John Blanchard) - Mark's Gospel in 45 daily readings
"Firm Foundations" (Peter Jeffery) - two months with the great chapters of the Bible

To keep at it:

Daily notes - "Discover", or Geneva Bible Study Notes.
A 3-year course - "Search the Scriptures"

Use other ways of improving your Bible knowledge

Collect and use some basic helps:

- Start with "A Christian Handbook" by Peter Jeffery - a plain and excellent introduction to the Bible,
- Church history and Christian doctrine.
- Get **and use** Matthew Henry's Commentary - a worthwhile lifetime investment.

And remember!

- That the Bible is more important than books about it, and any other book.
- To keep 1 John 4:1 in mind while reading any book at all.
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

HOW?

5. How to pray

Realise what prayer is and you'll **want** to pray

Prayer is communion with the living and true God.

He has chosen us (Ephesians 1:3-4).

He has made us his children and accepted us (Ephesians 1:5-6).

He has made us near, by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13).

He has opened the way for us to come boldly into his presence (Hebrews 10:19).

He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us pray (Romans 8:26-27).

How privileged we are!

We should aim to live all the time in communion with God (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Develop habits of prayer

Habits must come first.

A constant attitude of prayer will then follow later.

Church prayer

The Bible stresses praying **together**.

Most of the New Testament references deal with praying **together**.

– see Matthew 6:9-15, Acts 1:14, 3:1, 4:23-31, 12:5, 12.

Pray **together** with the church, and Christian friends.

Make this a high priority in your life.

Family prayer

A golden chain of family prayer runs through the whole Bible.

It is essential to have it in your home - if you can.

It is perilous to neglect it.

Private prayer

We must pray alone

- Jesus did (Mark 1:35, 6:46, 14:32-42).
- The apostles did (Acts 10:9, Romans 1:8-11).
- It is commanded (Matthew 6:5-8).

Such prayer should be

- every day
- alone
- uninterrupted (if possible!)

Follow patterns of prayer

Do not use men's patterns - how can one person write prayers for another person to use?

Our Lord himself has given us a pattern - Matthew 6:9-13

There are also many other prayers in the Bible which will help us: e.g.

- How to pray for new converts; Ephesians 1:15-23.
- How to pray for a Christian worker: Colossians 4:2-4, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2.
- The prayers of Moses, Elijah, David, Daniel, early church ...

Note! never separate prayer from Bible reading.

- This feeds your prayers.
- The Scriptures keep your prayer-life growing.
- They stop you thinking you know all there is to know.
- Bible study also stops you leaving out important aspects of prayer (adoration: thanksgiving: confession: intercession: petition: dedication).

Be prepared for problems in your prayer-life

"I don't feel like it"

- Let **duty** guide you when delight fades.
- Did you have too large a meal?

"I want to, but I can't work up any enthusiasm"

- There is such a thing as 'waiting on' the Lord.
- Cry for the Holy Spirit to breathe on you!
- Meditate on a passage of God's word.
- Look on the need.

"I feel too tired, too sleepy"

- What time did you go to bed?
- Try some fresh air.

"My thoughts wander"

- Don't be restricted to one posture, or one place.
- Use a prayer-list.
- Pray aloud.
- Open, or close, your eyes.

"My prayers are self-centred"

- Yes, a prayer-list.
- Are you using the Lord's pattern?
- Ask God to burden you for one person, and pray for him until he is saved.

"I fall into repetition"

- Base your prayers on Bible prayers.
- Do you pray with others as often as you can?

"I'm full of doubts"

- Read, re-read and reflect on such promises as Matthew 21:22, John 14:13-14, 15:7, 16:24.
- "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Use other helps in prayer

- Seek out an outstanding believer and ask to pray with him sometimes.
- Get to know the book of Psalms.
- Memorise some rich doctrinal hymns.
- Read helpful books on prayer.
- Try and help weaker Christians in their prayer-life, for it is more blessed to give than to receive.

HOW?

6. How to know what is right

- We are talking about **daily behaviour**, not problems of guidance. "As a Christian, would it be all right for me to do this, go there?"
- Second-hand convictions will not do. We have got to sort these things out for ourselves.
- We must realise this: those who **want** to do the will of God will never be left in the dark (John 7:17).
- "What's wrong with it?", "Why shouldn't I?", "Others do it, so why can't I?" - People who talk like this have already made up their minds. They will never know the light of God on their path.

There is no question about some things

They are clearly commanded, or clearly forbidden.

- Look at the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). We are saved by Christ, not law-keeping. But right is still right - being saved does not alter that. This is why the Ten Commandments are repeated and under-lined in the New Testament.
- Look at the rest of the Bible. The whole Bible is necessary to know what is right and what is wrong (2 Timothy 3:16-17). A definite **yes** is given to many things. A definite **no** is given to others (Put off, abstain, and lay aside).
- A Christian who is faithful in church-life, Bible study and prayer will soon come to know what is clearly commanded and what is clearly forbidden. That is why we have already covered those subjects in previous talks.

But about other things, questions do arise

They do not appear to be either clearly commanded or clearly forbidden. In such cases, there are two things to do:

Ask 5 questions

1. Will it bring glory to God? (1 Corinthians 10:31).
2. Will it help me in my Christian life? (1 Corinthians 10:23).
3. Does it tend to enslave? (1 Corinthians 6:12).
4. Will it strengthen me against temptation? (Matthew 6:13).
5. Is it Godly, or worldly? (1 John 2:15-17).

"The things which hinder are not necessarily low or vulgar. They may be in themselves noble things, intellectual things, beautiful things. But if our participation in any of these dims our vision of the ultimate goal in the purpose of God, holds us in our running, makes our going less determined and steady, they become weights and hinder"

(G. Campbell Morgan).

Remember 5 principles

1. On these questionable things, not everyone comes to the same conclusions (Romans chapter 14).
2. Because someone differs, it does not necessarily mean that he is less sincere in following the Lord (Romans 14:6).
3. When we differ in this area, we are not to quarrel (Romans 14:1,10)
4. If we consider we can do something with a clear conscience, we are **still** not to do it if this will hinder a fellow-Christian. (Romans 13:10, 14:13-17, 21).
5. If our conscience has even the slightest doubt about a thing, we are not to do it (Romans 14:22-23).

Let's take some actual examples

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Habits | - smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling. |
| Entertainments | - television, discos, clubs, football |
| Courting | - a non-Christian, petting. |
| At work | - laziness, lateness, days off, the firm's goods. |
| The Lord's Day | - going out, public transport, chores etc etc |

"Even Christ did not please himself" (Romans 15:3).

HOW?

7. How to overcome temptation

It is not enough to know what is right, for we are all tempted to do wrong. Our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted throughout his whole life (Matthew 4:1-11, 16:23, Hebrews 2:18, 4:15) and we certainly won't avoid it (Luke 17:1). It is not, then, temptation which is wrong, but **giving in** to it.

Be prepared for temptation before it comes

It is going to come, again and again. So look out for it! On guard! This is what Jesus commands (Mark 14:38). So do the apostles (1 Thessalonians 5:6, 1 Peter 5:8).

Be careful!

- Temptation is not always obvious (2 Corinthians 11:14).
- Don't be too sure of yourself (1 Corinthians 10:12).
- Pray about temptation every day (Matthew 6:13).

Know how to resist the devil when he comes

Look at the example of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:1-11).

- He did not argue with the devil, talk it over, or re-consider.
- He simply told him what God's word had to say and made it clear he would follow it.
- "Then the devil left him."

Realise that you cannot be compelled to give in

- Only Christ has the right to rule your life (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- Your rightful Master has defeated the devil (Colossians 2:15)
- With each temptation there is a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- With the shield of faith, you can quench **all** the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:16).

Resist at once - don't delay

Sin starts with the thoughts.

First the idea presents itself - then it seems attractive - next comes the desire to do it - then it is done - shortly afterwards it becomes an open thing - which grows up, and causes death (see James 1:14-15).

The very moment the idea comes, act! Don't delay! (Arab & the camel).
Avoid all compromise ("Just this once" - "a little won't hurt" - etc...).

Aim at all-round holiness

Some believers spend all their time trying to stop doing one or two particular sins which they cannot seem to resist.

Don't be content with cutting off one or two branches - aim at renewing the whole tree! (2 Peter 1:5-8, 3:18).

- Seek to become a man or woman of God (Hebrews 12:14).
- The whole character is to please God (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

Live a full life

"The expulsive power of a new affection"

It is no good being clean, yet empty. As you clear out evil, replace it with good (Matthew 12:43-45, Ephesians 4:28-32).

In the same way, turn your back on idleness and boredom (2 Samuel 11:1-3).

The devil still has work for idle hands to do.

Instead - "Do not grow weary in doing good" (2 Thessalonians 3:13).

*Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you,
He will carry you through.*

HOW?

8. How to please God

We should aim to please God the whole time (Colossians 1:10, Hebrews 13:21).
What we have learned so far has given us **general rules** to help us, but we all need **special** advice in the five main things which make up daily life.

At home

The secret is:	Submissive wives	Ephesians 5:22-24.	Colossians 3:18
	Loving husbands	Ephesians 5:25	Colossians 3:19
	Obedient children	Ephesians 6:1-3	Colossians 3:20
	Gentle, firm fathers	Ephesians 6:4	Colossians 3:21

Where God's plan for the family is broken, the family soon breaks up.
Where God's plan is carried out, happy homes are found.
No one must point the finger. Each one must do what God says to **him/her**.

At work

Ephesians 6:5-6 ("...as servants of Christ") & Colossians 3:22-25 ("...as to the Lord").
Christ himself is your employer!

So

- be punctual; work well; seek excellence; give a full day's work.
- be well turned-out; take your stand (draw the line; go to the C.U.).
- be a friend; be a soul winner.

Among your neighbours

Our guide here is the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37).
The good neighbour was the one who showed kindness: "Go and do likewise."

- Notice need.
- Help those in need.

In your spare time

You can tell what sort of Christian a person is by seeing how he uses his spare time - for if God has your time, he has **all** of you.

We are to be "redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:16).

This means using our spare time in the **best** possible way; making it serve some definite **purpose**; never wasting it; never having "nothing to do"

Some helpful hints:

- In God's presence, decide what regular things you should do each week. Then stick to them!
- Plan each day before you come to it.
- Plan ahead, with a diary. This stops you being busy doing nothing!
- Do not neglect helpful leisure and physical exercise.

With your money

None of us has any money of our own! It is the Lord's. (1 Chronicles 29:10-16)

Budget it! - How can you be a good steward (manager) if you don't?

- It is the only way to check unnecessary spending.
 - It is the way to stop falling into debt (Romans 13:8).
-
- Keep a record of what comes in.
 - Immediately put aside one-tenth for the Lord's work (Matthew 23:23).
 - Now put aside enough to meet your regular obligations (mortgage or rent, housekeeping, heat and light, water, council tax, insurances, travel, clothes, telephone, TV licence, car tax, etc. etc.....
 - Next, put aside a **definite** sum to save, however small.
 - Finally, ask the Lord to help you spend what remains, unselfishly and responsibly.

*"We make it our aim ... to be well pleasing to **Him**.
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."
(2 Corinthians 5:9-10).*

HOW?

9. How to know God's will

We are no longer talking about daily behaviour (no. 6), nor about the five areas of daily life we considered last time (no.8), but about **guidance** and **decision making** (Should I change my job? Does the Lord want me to be a missionary? Should I marry him/her? Where should I live?)

What do you really want to do? - God's will or yours?

- This is the choice constantly before us (1 Peter 4:1-2).
- God's will is known only by those who present themselves to Him as living sacrifices (Romans 12:1-2).
- When we really choose to do God's will, He never leaves us in ignorance of it (John 7:17, Proverbs 3:5-6).

How you feel is of no importance

- Decisions made on the basis of feelings are bad decisions (Genesis 25:27-34, Hebrews 12:14-17); they are also sinful (Romans 6:12, 14:23) and ruinous (Proverbs 14:12).
- Christians should not behave as pagans (1 Corinthians 12:1-3).
- Whatever God's Spirit does in us, He does through the **mind** (2 Timothy 1:7, Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 3:15).

The Bible open, think, and pray

Not to be constantly referring to Scripture is to walk in the dark (Psalm 119:11, 104-105, 130).

Think! - Where will this road lead? (Deuteronomy 32:29).
- What do wise friends say? (Proverbs 12:15, - 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)
- What do circumstances indicate? (Romans 8:28, Acts 16:6-10).

Pray - That God's will may be done (Matthew 6:10).
- For wisdom (Colossians 1:9-10, James 1:5-8, Luke 6:12-13: principle of stratification).

If all this is done, you will eventually get a settled conviction about what you should do - which may come to you in an unexpected way.

When you know what to do - do it!

- Do it with enthusiasm (Ecclesiastes 9:10, Psalms 40:8).
- Find out how good God's will is! (Romans 12:1-2).
- Live confidently: being imperfect, you will still make some wrong decisions - but these will not ruin you (Psalms 37:23-24, Romans 8:28).

HOW?

10. How to serve God

All believers are God's servants

- There are only two masters - sin or God (Romans 6:15-23).
- If you're no longer serving one, you're serving the other.

All believers have good reason to serve Him

- Romans 12:1
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

All believers are in full-time service

- Romans 12:1.
- 1 Corinthians 10:31.
- Colossians 3:17,22-24.

There are varieties of service

- We all have talents - but not the same number (Matthew 25:14-30).
- We all have spiritual gifts - but not the same ones (Romans 12:3-8).
- We all have opportunities - but these differ (Galatians 6:10).

God does not evaluate our service as others do

- The world stresses the **task** - especially bigness and prominence.
- The Lord stresses our **attitude** - are we doing it for **Him**?
 - The child and his father
 - The preacher and the floor-mopper.
 - The little girl, Naaman and Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-19).
 - Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43).
 - The woman and the alabaster flask (Mark 14:3-9).

There is a question we should never stop asking

- "What is the most important thing for me to do now?"

HOW?

11. How to win others

Many things keep Christians back from trying to win others:

- Lack of love - which shows itself in laziness.
- Fear - of what people will say.
- Fear - of making a mistake.
- Feelings - not being 'fit' for such a task.

BUT:

- It is not a task that we may or may not choose to do. It is part of being a disciple. Mark 1:17, Matthew 28:18-20.
- God has great things to say about soul winners. Proverbs 11:30, Daniel 12:3.
- The need of men and women should make us **want** to win them. 2 Corinthians 4:3.
- Our own experience of God should drive us to speak to others. Acts 4:20.

We all **know** that we should try to win others.
But **how** do we set about it??

Grasp two principles

1. Realise that no one can be saved unless God himself works in their life. John 6:44, Ephesians 2:8-10.
2. Realise that no one can be saved unless they have the gospel proclaimed to them. John 3:16, Romans 10:9-14.

The first principle should move us to prayer.
The second should drive us to proclaim the word. See Acts 6:4.

Work these principles out in practice

Personal soul winning

Most people are won this way.
Many great churches were founded through personal soul winning.

Pray to God to lay **one** person on your heart, and make up your mind to win him/her, however long it takes.

- Pray for that person every day - asking God to have mercy on him.
- Become that person's friend, seeking the help of God at each step.
- Naturally the friendship will deepen - but do not be drawn away from your walk with God in the process.
- Your friend will notice your life. Questions will be asked. There will be unforced opportunities for you to speak of Christ.

Be prepared! - To take time.
- To sacrifice.
- To have many disappointments.

"In due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9)

Some other suggestions

- Bring unconverted friends to church.
- Help in open-air work, visiting, children's work, etc.
- Join with other Christians at school or work.
- Carry tracts, and use them wisely.
- Write letters.
- Use your home (a branch Sunday school? Neighbours' meetings?)
- Take someone on holiday with you.
- Join in special evangelistic efforts.

Talk and pray with an Office-bearer about other suggestions that you might have.

Some things to remember

- A holy life is needed - when we walk with God, others cannot help but be affected. Psalm 67.
- Our commission is to spread the **gospel** - not arguments, proofs, forced decisions, or even testimonies. Mark 16:15.
- It is to **heaven** that we are going! What a joy to meet there those whom we have helped to the Saviour! 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20.

*Mine are the hands to do the work,
My feet shall run for Thee,
My lips shall sound the glorious news;
Lord, here am I - send me;*

HOW?

12. How to deal with worry

- Worry is sin (Matthew 6:25, John 14:1, Philippians 4:6, 1 Peter 5:7).
- It can be forgiven (1 John 1:9), but should be overcome (Romans 6:14).
- Yet this destructive sin cripples countless Christians - many of them of long standing.

What worry is

- It is focusing on tomorrow.
- It is concern over the unknowable and uncontrollable future, especially with reference to material needs and physical health (Matthew 6:25-34).

- Tomorrow may be planned for in the spirit of "Your will, not mine, be done" (look at James 4:13-17).
- But the way to banish worry and to enjoy peace is to focus your concerns on **today** (Matthew 6:34).

- All that I am, and have, is to be poured into **today**.
- Emotional energy is to be used to mobilise body and mind to tackle life's problems **today**, when something can be accomplished.

- We are to take care of **today's** problems.
- We are to chop down **today's** trees, ending the day tired and satisfied.
- We are not to allow problems to pile up.
- We must live one day at a time: "What is the most important thing for **me** to do **now**?"

- WORRY is the failure to do this.

What to do about it

Philippians 4:6-9 lays down three steps :-

Pray today! (v.6-7)

- Say all : tell the Lord everything you have to say to Him at this present moment in your life.
- Say please : ask Him whatever is on your heart relating to this particular worry (see 1 Peter 5:7).
- Say thank-you : not only for what He is going to do, but for the problem itself - Romans 8:28 really is true!
- Say nothing : as you enjoy His peace. Your heavenly Father is taking care of you (Matthew 6:25-34).

Survey today! (v.8)

- There is more than your problem to think about.
- Feed your mind! - feed it with what God tells you to feed it on.
- This ensures a healthy mind where everything is in perspective.

Obey today! (v.9)

- The final solution to worry is to work.
- Worriers are lazy people: there are duties to be done **today!** **now!**
- Perhaps you can't change the situation.
- But **you** can change **in** the situation: how can you live **today** for the glory of God?
- "... and the God of peace will be with you."

HOW?

13. How to prepare for death

- the believer will be well enough prepared for death if he remembers two key verses :-

**“Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth”
(Proverbs 27:1).**

The correct attitude

We are not to assume we shall see tomorrow; nor are we to conclude that we won't : this is the balance we have always to maintain.

What this means in practice

We live each day as holily as if we knew it to be our last, avoiding all sin, and being ready to answer at the judgement.
Yet we make proper plans for tomorrow, in the spirit of "Your will, not mine, be done" (Proverbs 6:6-8, 10:5, James 4:13-17).

Why boasting about tomorrow is foolish

Nobody anywhere knows the day, time and circumstances of his death.
Sudden deaths are common.
Today's health guarantees nothing, nor does today's usefulness.

What such boasters look like

They talk about tomorrow as certain : what they hope to do then is what makes them happy : they postpone until then, things which must be done before they die (sins to finish with; quarrels to sort out; treat Sunday as if there were plenty more to follow) : they do today what they hope to undo before they die : they think of death as 'not yet'.

We prepare for death by living today well

This is the way of happiness. Those who live for tomorrow know no peace of heart. Be sure you are a Christian. Walk with God. Avoid all sin. Keep a clear conscience. Leave no duties undone.
Those who live well, die well.

**“They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland”
(Hebrews 11:13b-14).**

We are pilgrims...

These saints did not see this world as their home. They were just passing through it, travelling to a better country to which they belonged. This is how people of faith behave. Their heart is set on their journey's end. All that happens in life is only incidents along the way.

... on the King's highway...

The road to heaven is the way of holiness (Hebrews 12:14). It goes through a desert, and we should walk it courageously. Our life's business is to get safely to our destination. We should give all our efforts to this. Everything we do should serve this great aim. Nothing should distract us. We must be sure never to go astray - how tragic to be going in the wrong direction!
And can we not help each other more on the journey?

... going home!

God did not create us to spend all our life here - but in heaven! Death is not a disaster, but going home!

- Live so as to have no regrets on your death-bed (if you have one).
- Find out as much as you can about your eternal home.
- Think, think about heaven, that you may rejoice when the call comes!!

"This is the way to have death comfortable to us. To spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, is the way to be free from bondage, and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable" (Jonathan Edwards).