

# Questions about being a Christian

## **1. At what point can you say, "I've become a Christian?"**

The transaction for becoming a Christian is extremely simple. The moment you pray, "Lord Jesus, thank You for dying in my place. Please forgive me, cleanse me, and save me," you become a Christian. Most people experience the devil telling them, "That was all a farce." Don't listen to such lies! It may take time to really start living like a Christian, but you become a Christian from the moment of your decision.

## **2. What is forbidden for a Christian?**

A more productive question is, "What can Christians do?" Christians can live daily in the peace and joy of God. Christians have the Holy Spirit. The Bible says, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." However, to live lives like that we have to avoid doing things that will grieve the Holy Spirit. Things like lying, immorality, pride, greed, hatred ... Things like that grieve the Holy Spirit. Thinking logically, we want to make the Holy Spirit happy, don't we!

## **3. How should I tell my family and friends I am going to become a Christian?**

I realize this is a scary prospect, but it's a big opportunity for evangelism. First, it's wise to write out your decision on paper. (You can use it for your confession of faith at your baptism.) Doing that helps you think through what you've done and why. Of course, you should pray, both before and after writing; you need the help of the Holy Spirit! Then, you look for God's timing. Sometimes God says "NOW," but sometimes He doesn't. When the timing doesn't seem clear, I have two suggestions. The first is not to wait too long. Putting it off often makes it more difficult. The other point is that after a meal is better than before a meal, because emotions are calmer then.

## **4. What about Buddhist family altars and grave visits for Christians?**

This is indeed a big problem for Christians. It is good to show respect for your ancestors, but we are not to worship anything besides God. There's no problem to doing clean up around the grave, but you need to avoid burning incense. You'll need to explain your position to your family, which, though difficult, is quite an opportunity to witness. You can tell them your feelings about death, and the hope that you have in Christ. If you are the head of your household, the Buddhist altar should be gotten rid of. If you are not, you can't force things, but worshipping ancestors is idolatry. I'm not saying you must not attend Buddhist memorial ceremonies for your ancestors, but putting your hands together in prayer to them or burning incense to them certainly doesn't give glory to God.

## **5. Are things like tobacco and alcohol forbidden for Christians?**

The Bible says that our bodies are God's temple (1 Corinthians 6:19). It follows that anything not good for our bodies is damaging to the temple of God. (Following that line of reasoning makes it clear that over-eating and under-exercising are also not good, doesn't it!) Tobacco isn't mentioned in the Bible (after all, it's native to the Americas), but alcohol is mentioned in various places in the Bible. Ephesians 5:18 says specifically "do not be drunk on wine, which

leads to debauchery (extreme indulgence in sensual pleasure)" ... but 1 Timothy 5:23 says "a little wine is good for your stomach." Psalm 104:15 gives credit to God for creating "wine to gladden the heart of man" ... but Proverbs 20:1 says "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise." Proverbs 23:20 - 21, 29 - 35; 31:4 - 6 and Isaiah 28:7 point out that wine and beer can distort one's ability to make good decisions. Romans 14:16 - 23 tells us that we have a responsibility to our fellow Christian brothers and sisters to not do anything that will cause THEM to stumble. If we encourage someone to drink, and they have a weakness in that area of their life, God holds us responsible for what happens to them.