

Are You in Christ?

By Steve Klein

The very name "Christian" suggests that one who is worthy of the name has a close relationship with Christ. The scriptures emphasize this closeness by referring to Christians as being "in Christ" (**2 Corinthians 1:21**). Two individuals cannot get any closer! The things that can be found in this relationship are the things that meet our deepest needs, such as forgiveness of sins, a fresh start in life and something to hope for beyond death. In fact, God "has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places IN CHRIST" (**Ephesians 1:3**).

Since all of us have sinned (**Romans 3:23**), we all need forgiveness. We can find it in Christ. In Him we have "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (**Colossians 1:13-14**).

Having messed up our lives with sin, we also greatly need a fresh start in life, and we can find it in Christ. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

A hope of eternal life is also found in Christ. Christians

know that "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (**1 John 5:11**).

The things that are in Christ are the things everyone needs, but everyone is not in Christ. Many think they are, but are they really? Have they done what it takes according to scripture to have access to the blessings found in Christ?

How does a person get into Christ, anyway?

Only two verses in the Bible contain the phrase "into Christ." They are **Galatians 3:27** and **Romans 6:3**. **Galatians 3:27** states, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." **Romans 6:3** states, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" Obviously, when a believer is baptized he is baptized "into" Christ and thus "puts on Christ."

Believers who have been scripturally baptized are in Christ. They have believed before being buried in the watery grave of baptism for the remission of their sins. Are you in Christ?



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The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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Liberty or Addiction?

By Phil T. Arnold



Thought to Ponder

You do anything long enough to escape the habit of living until the escape becomes the habit.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (**1 Cor. 6:12**).

Are all things truly "lawful"? Of course not! There are some things that God has forbidden under any and all circumstances. In the Galatian letter, Paul wrote, "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (**Gal. 5:19-21**). Are the aforementioned attitudes and actions lawful? Obviously not! Therefore, the statement by Paul must be reexamined in the light of the context and the "all things" must be found to have some limitation.

Or do you continue in the practice because the "liberty" has become an "addiction" and is stronger than you are? Recognize that such enslavement is sin.

which are lawful, and that is those things which God has bound upon man. Again, Paul wrote in the Galatian letter, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (**Gal. 5:22-23**). Is there ever a time or circumstance when the aforementioned characteristics are not "helpful" or "expedient"? Again, we must answer in the negative.

What then is Paul speaking of when he says, "All things are lawful"? We are forced to conclude that he is not talking about those things that God has through his will forbidden nor is Paul speaking of those things which

(Continued on page 2)

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

Classes This Week

Sun 5:15 PM Kid's Class at the Bldg.	Mon 7PM Men's Class at the Davis'	Wed 10 AM Ladies' Class at the Robert's	Thur 7 PM Joshua Study ay Jillian and Hannah's
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Sick

Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Lori Holloway	Chick Wade	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Jared Nixon	Philip Locke (Jeremiah Johnson's Uncle)
Ross Folmar	Grandparents of Mary Ann Roberts	Joe Perry (Anna Miller's Relative)	Marsha (Toni Herd's Cousin)
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	Kenn and Ellen Smith (Ken Sullivan's Parents)	Erlene Davis (Walker Davis' mother)	Lee (William Herd's Cousin)
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Bill Rhodes (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Mike Reed (Friend of the Long's)
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frank Johnson (Debbi Coleman's Uncle)	Herbert Missildine (Toni Herd's Uncle)	Jo Faust Williams (Manna Jones' friend)

February Birthdays

- 2 - Ken Sullivanne
- 2- Maghen Smith
- 2 - Wesley Herd
- 3 - Chris Long
- 5 - Mark Zeanah
- 5 - Josh Redden
- 6 - Jackson Fowler
- 8 - Grant Burton
- 13 - Megan McMurry
- 13- Leslie Freeman
- 14 - Leighton Daniels
- 15 - Ella Miller
- 15 - Terria Burton
- 16 - Seth Humphrey
- 17 - A J Wilkerson
- 18- Caralise Hunt
- 20 - Haley Chittam
- 20 - Lara West
- 23 - Lisa Lanier
- 24 - Jeff Jerkins
- 27 - Julie Johnson

News and Notes

- Our next Gospel Meeting will be Feb 27- Mar 3 with Alan Cornett
- Let us welcome our new members: Jordan and Missy Toombs; 449 N. Ross St., Apt 12, 36830; (J) - (931) 215-3053 (M) (931) 446-6078
- Mike a Debbie Johnson's son, Matthew, will be deployed this month.
- Tim Morton is currently serving our country n Afghanistan. Please remember him in your prayers.
- Jon Coleman continues treatments and is receiving good reports.
- David Golden will be deployed in Iraq in April.
- The Ogle's daughter, Joy, gave birth to Joseph Alexander Oliver on Friday!
- Audio CD's will be available in the foyer after each service.

(Continued from page 1)

God has bound upon man. Thus, we are left with only one category of things which Paul has under consideration - those things wherein God has not legislated and which are therefore matters of indifference to God, matters which God allows but does not obligate man to do. For example, marriage: God allows us to marry but he has not commanded us to do so. Therefore, it is something that is lawful, but may not prove to be "helpful" or expedient under a given circumstance. Or for example, playing baseball: God would allow us to play baseball but it may not be "helpful" or expedient under all circumstances, and he certainly has not commanded that we "must" play baseball to be acceptable to him. In 1 Corinthians Paul determined that the matter of eating meats was a matter of indifference to God (morally neutral or a liberty). Yet, he determined that if the eating of meat was not spiritually profitable but instead destructive, he would never eat meat again (**see 1 Cor. 8**). Therefore, God would have us to conclude even among those things that may be right and lawful within themselves as to whether or not they will (under a given circumstance) build up my faith, hinder my influence, draw me closer to God, distract from my heavenly goal, etc. We are called upon to ask, "Will it be advantageous under a given circumstance to exercise my liberty in this matter of moral neutrality?" And there should not be anything that we would not be willing to forego for the sake of spiritual interests.

In addition, Paul adds a second principle to "expediency" or "helpfulness" for making such choices among "all things" of moral neutrality. Paul suggested, "I will not be brought under the power of any." We all are perhaps "creatures of habit" but none of us can afford to allow a "habit" to become an "addiction." "Gluttony" (the failure to be in control of one's appetites) is forbidden in any realm. Peter wrote, 'for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage' (**2 Pet. 2:19b**). And again Paul wrote, "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin

leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (**Rom. 6:16**) We can never allow ourselves to become a "slave" to any habit or practice even of moral neutrality. When we do, we lose our ability to practice the first principle Paul suggested. We will no longer be able to determine when a matter of liberty is or is not expedient or helpful. Being enslaved, we will be powerless to say "no." Later in **1 Corinthians 9:27**, Paul said, "But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." Paul is not here speaking of staying away from evil things or things forbidden by God, but instead he was talking about staying away from lawful things. He uses the illustration of an athlete (**1 Cor. 9:24-26**) to say that just as an athlete chooses to abstain from many good and right things to keep himself in training and strive for the prize, so too the Christian must exercise control over his desires. We must always be in a position to be able to say "no" concerning anything of moral neutrality or liberty. When a Christian clutches to his "liberty" too tightly it becomes his lord. And for a Christian to be overpowered by any custom or habit or practice, no matter what it is, is sin.

Is there anything in your life that is your habit or practice and it really is not helpful or expedient to serving the Lord and living for him under the present circumstances? Why then does it continue to be your habit or practice? Is not the kingdom of God, serving the Lord, encouraging your brethren, and leading others to Christ more important than any matter or liberty? Or do you continue in the practice because the "liberty" has become an "addiction" and is stronger than you are? Recognize that such enslavement is sin. Give the matter over to the Lord and let him and your brethren help you to become "disciplined" so as to "deny self" and have Christ enthroned. "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you become slaves of righteousness" (**Rom. 6:17,18**).



Flee Fornication

By Bob West

A third popular defense of fornication is the "consenting adults" argument. It suggests that, whatever the motivation for the act, if the people involved mutually agree, then it should be acceptable. But such reasoning blatantly disregards the word of God... Fornication remains a violation of God's will, in spite of anyone's consent.

Everyone can see that as the standards of morality decline in society, this has an impact among those who are children of God. That the practice of fornication has increased among young people in recent years, is a fact that few would deny. There are no "magical formulas" for parents and young folks with which to solve the problem. All we can do is remember that the Bible is God's word, and the practice of fornication is severely condemned therein. Read with care such passages as **1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-6**, etc. The fact that the words "fornication," "adultery," and related terms are used so frequently in the Bible should give us a clue as to the seriousness of the subject. These words are found no less than 92 times in the New Testament. By comparison, the words "murder," "killing," etc., are found only 32 times. That, in itself, should tell the sincere child of God why we should "flee fornication." (**See also 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22**)

But, in spite of these plain statements regarding this sin, some claiming to be Christians continue their immorality. There are three subtle and widely-accepted arguments in defense of fornication which Satan has made familiar to all.

One of these runs something like this: "After all, a sin is a sin; fornication is no worse than any other sin. Since nobody is perfect, why be so concerned about this particular sin?" We reply by first observing that, of course, so far as God is concerned, 'sin is sin.' All sins condemn (**Romans 6:23**). But these facts should in no way lessen our abhorrence of fornication. It would be about like a Doctor who would suggest that we shouldn't be concerned about preventing heart disease, since there are so many other diseases which will kill us just as dead! There is a subtle error here which appears to be overlooked: While all violations of God's law are equally serious, so far as God is concerned, that is not true with regard to man! For instance both murder and lying are sins. However, I would surely prefer for a someone to lie against me rather than murder me! The point is,

that the consequence of some sins, in this life, are more disastrous than others. Such is the case with fornication. Right out front, it involves two people. In fact, it could well involve more than two, if one or both of the fornicators are married. I can cite you more than one example where a single act of fornication has affected the lives of literally dozens of people in the wake of broken homes, broken hearts, bitterness, guilt-related neurosis, etc. The consequences of this sin

cannot be minimized.

Another equally deceptive argument which tends to minimize fornication, offers "love" as an excuse. The entertainment media have so successfully sold the idea that fornication is acceptable as long as two people "really love each other," that even some Christians have swallowed it. In the first place, "love" never justifies a violation of God's law. Secondly, if one person really loved the other, as the Bible uses the term, he or she would not want that person to do that which alienates one from God. And, thirdly, the argument confuses love with lust. Love is selfless, in that it puts the interests of the other person before all other considerations. Lust is selfish, in that it uses the other person for personal gratification.

A third popular defense of fornication is the "consenting adults" argument. It suggests that, whatever the motivation for the act, if the people involved mutually agree, then it should be acceptable. But such reasoning blatantly disregards the word of God. Most civilized people have come to understand that dueling is still murder, even though both parties have "consented" to the duel. Fornication remains a violation of God's will, in spite of anyone's consent.

We must learn to respect the revelation of God, realizing that He knows what is best for His creatures. In spite of the moral atmosphere of our generation, our Lord continues to demand that we "Flee Fornication."

