

***R. A. TORREY***



***HOW TO SUCCEED  
IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE***

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# **How to Succeed in the Christian Life**

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# INTRODUCTION

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I have for years felt the need of a book to put in the hands of those beginning the Christian life that would tell them just how to make a complete success of this new life upon which they were entering. I could find no such book, so I have been driven to write one. This book aims to tell the young convert just what he most needs to know. I hope that pastors and evangelists and other Christian workers may find it a good book to put in the hands of young converts. I hope that it may also prove a helpful book to many who have long been Christians but have not made that headway in the Christian life that they long for.

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## How to Succeed in the Christian Life

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# I

## **BEGINNING RIGHT**

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There is nothing more important in the Christian life than beginning right. If we begin right we can go on right. If we begin wrong the whole life that follows is likely to be wrong. If any one who reads these pages has begun wrong, it is a very simple matter to begin over again and begin right. What the right beginning in the Christian life is we are told in John 1: 12, "But as many as RECEIVED HIM, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." The right way to begin the Christian life is by receiving Jesus Christ. To any one who receives Him, He at once gives power to become a child of God. If the reader of this book should be the wickedest man on earth and should at this moment receive Jesus Christ, that very instant he would become a child of God. God says so in the most unqualified way in the verse quoted above. No one can become a child of God in any other way. No man, no matter how carefully he has been reared, no matter how well he has been sheltered from the vices and evils of this world, is a child of God until he receives Jesus Christ. We are "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3: 26, R. V.), and in no other way.

What does it mean to receive Jesus Christ? It means to take Christ to be to yourself all that God offers Him to be to everybody. Jesus Christ is God's gift. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16). Some accept this wondrous gift of God. Every one who does accept this gift becomes a child of God. Many

others refuse this wondrous gift of God, and every one who refuses this gift of God perishes. He is condemned already. "He that believeth on the Son is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3: 18).

What does God offer His Son to be to us?

1. First of all, *God offers Jesus to us to be our sin-bearer*. We have all sinned. There is not a man or woman or a boy or a girl who has not sinned (Romans 3: 22, 23). If any of us say that we have not sinned we are deceiving ourselves and giving the lie to God (1 John 1: 8, 10). Now we must each of us bear our own sin or some one else must bear it in our place. If we were to bear our own sins, it would mean we must be banished forever from the presence of God, for God is holy. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). But God Himself has provided another to bear our sins in our place so that we should not need to bear them ourselves. This sin-bearer is God's own Son, Jesus Christ, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). When Jesus Christ died upon the cross of Calvary He redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse in our stead (Gal. 3:13). To receive Christ then is to believe this testimony of God about His Son, to believe that Jesus Christ did bear our sins in His own body on the cross (1 Pet. 2:24), and to trust God to forgive all our sins because Jesus Christ has borne them in our place. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6). Our own good works, past, present or future have nothing to do with the forgiveness of our sins. Our sins are forgiven, not because of any good works that we do, they are forgiven because of the atoning work of Christ upon the cross of Calvary in our place. If we rest in this

atoning work we shall do good works, but our good works will be the outcome of our being saved and the outcome of our believing on Christ as our sin-bearer. Our good works will not be the ground of our salvation, but the result of our salvation, and the proof of it. We must be very careful not to mix in our good works at all as the ground of salvation. We are not forgiven because of Christ's death *and our good works*, we are forgiven solely and entirely because of Christ's death. To see this clearly is the right beginning of the true Christian life.

2. *God offers Jesus to us as our deliverer from the power of sin.* Jesus not only died, He rose again. To-day He is a living Saviour. He has all power in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28: 18). He has power to keep the weakest sinner from falling (Jude 24). He is able to save not only from the uttermost but "to the uttermost" all that come unto the Father through Him. (Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through Him, seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for them.— Heb. 7: 25, R. V.) "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8: 36). To receive Jesus is to believe this that God tells us in His Word about Him, to believe that He did rise from the dead, to believe that He does now live, to believe that He has power to keep us from falling, to believe that He has power to keep us from the power of sin day by day, and just trust Him to do it.

This is the secret of daily victory over sin. If we try to fight sin in our own strength, we are bound to fail. If we just look up to the risen Christ to keep us every day and every hour, He will keep us. Through the crucified Christ we get deliverance from the guilt of sin, our sins are all blotted out, we are free from all condemnation; but it is through the risen Christ that we get daily victory over the power of sin. Some receive Christ as a sin-bearer and thus find pardon, but do not get beyond that, and so their life is one of daily



failure. Others receive Him as their risen Saviour also, and thus enter into an experience of victory over sin. To begin right we must take Him not only as our sin-bearer, and thus find pardon; but we must also take Him as our risen Saviour, our Deliverer from the power of sin, our Keeper, and thus find daily victory over sin.

3. But *God offers Jesus to us, not only as our sin-bearer and our Deliverer from the power of sin, but He also offers Him to us as our Lord and King.* We read in Acts 2: 36, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Lord means Divine Master, and Christ means anointed King. To receive Jesus is to take Him as our Divine Master, as the One to whom we yield the absolute confidence of our intellects, the One whose word we believe absolutely, the One whom we will believe though many of the wisest of men may question or deny the truth of His teachings; and as our King to whom we gladly yield the absolute control of our lives, so that the question from this time on is never going to be, what would I like to do or what do others tell me to do, or what do others do, but the whole question is WHAT WOULD MY KING JESUS HAVE ME DO? A right beginning involves an unconditional surrender to the Lordship and Kingship of Jesus.

The failure to realize that Jesus is Lord and King, as well as Saviour, has led to many a false start in the Christian life. We begin with Him as our Saviour, as our sin-bearer and our Deliverer from the power of sin, but we must not end with Him merely as Saviour, we must know Him as Lord and King. There is nothing more important in a right beginning of the Christian life than an unconditional surrender, both of the thoughts and the conduct to Jesus. Say from your heart and say it again and again, "All for Jesus." Many fail because they shrink back from this entire surrender. They wish to serve Jesus with half their heart, and part of themselves and

part of their possessions. To hold back anything from Jesus means a wretched life of stumbling and failure.

The life of entire surrender is a joyous life all along the way. If you have never done it before, go alone with God today, get down on your knees and say, "All for Jesus," and mean it. Say it very earnestly; say it from the bottom of your heart. Stay there until you realize what it means and what you are doing. It is a wondrous step forward when one really takes it. If you have taken it already, take it again, take it often. It always has fresh meaning and brings fresh blessedness. In this absolute surrender is found the key to the truth. Doubts rapidly disappear for one who surrenders all (John 7: 17). In this absolute surrender is found the secret of power in prayer (1 John 3: 22). In this absolute surrender is found the supreme condition of receiving the Holy Ghost (Acts 5: 32).

Taking Christ as your Lord and King involves obedience to His will as far as you know it in each smallest detail of life. There are those who tell us that they have taken Christ as their Lord and King who at the same time are disobeying Him daily in business, in domestic life, in social life and in personal conduct. Such persons are deceiving themselves. You have not taken Jesus as your Lord and King if you are not striving to obey Him in everything each day. He Himself says, "Why call ye Me 'Lord, Lord!' and do not the things that I say?" (Luke 6: 46).

To sum it all up, the right way to begin the Christian life is to accept Jesus Christ as your sin-bearer and to trust God to forgive your sins because Jesus Christ died in your place; to accept Him as your risen Saviour who ever lives to make intercession for you, and who has all power to keep you, and to trust Him to keep you from day to day; and to accept Him as your Lord and King to whom you surrender the absolute control of your thoughts and of your life. This is the right