

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Bible Correspondence Course

## Lesson #9: Who are the Christadelphians?

Free Booklet Offer: See page 7

This Lesson is the final one of the Bible Study Course. The Worksheet is divided into two parts. For the first part of the Worksheet you will simply need to answer questions directly from your Bible. For the second part of the Worksheet answer the questions according to the enclosed Lesson, *Who are the Christadelphians?* and/or the Bible verses indicated. The author of the Lesson has used the King James Version of the Bible but you may fill in the blanks from the version of your choice, and make any necessary changes.

*"Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I command you." John 15:14*

### **PART 1: Knowledge, Understanding and Truth**

Our Creator has endowed us all with a natural desire to seek Him and His love. He has also graciously provided the Scriptures to make it possible for us to satisfy our need. All that is required of us is that we search the Bible to discover who God is, what He has done, what He has promised, and what He requires from us. Let's examine some of the most important steps and principles in the process of discovering and serving God.

First of all, the Bible tells us time and again that in order to please God and serve Him acceptably, we must be diligent in our efforts to come to a knowledge of the truth. It is only natural that God should expect us to search out the truth, for common experience teaches us that mistaken belief, no matter how sincerely held, can do little to help us and may be positively dangerous. The driver approaching a railway crossing may sincerely believe that his automobile is faster than a freight train, but if he misjudges, as sometimes happens, his sincere faith in the speed of his car will not save vehicle and driver from being crushed by the locomotive. Knowledge and belief have to be true in order to be valid and useful; false knowledge is not real knowledge, neither is there any virtue in mistaken belief, no matter how sincerely it may be held.

1. Paul comments on his Jewish brethren's lack of understanding of the gospel, in **Romans 10:2** — "I bear them record that they have a \_\_\_\_\_ for God, but not according to \_\_\_\_\_."

In other words, we do well to have a zeal for God, but zeal alone will be of little benefit unless it is directed by a true knowledge of what God wants from us.

2. In **I Timothy 2:4**, Paul tells us that God, "desires all men to be saved and to come unto a \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_."

Salvation involves coming to a knowledge of the true teaching about God, which can be found only in the Bible.

3. Similarly, in **2 Timothy 3:7** Paul laments over weak people who are swayed by false teachings and "never able to come to a knowledge of the \_\_\_\_\_."

4. Paul continues in **2 Timothy 4:3-4** to warn — “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the \_\_\_\_\_ and shall be turned to \_\_\_\_\_.”

We must have a good personal understanding of the Bible based on a close familiarity with it. There just is no other way. There are no shortcuts for the important things in life. If a subject is important to us and we are sensible men and women, we will expend a great deal of time and effort in coming to a true understanding of it. Conversely, if we devote little effort to understanding a given subject, this shows that it has little importance to us. The amount of time and effort we put into finding out the truth of God’s scriptures shows to God how important He is to us. What message do we send to God by our attitude toward the Bible? God will forgive us many errors, but He cannot stand to be ignored.

5. In **Jeremiah 9:23-24**, the Creator tells us — “Let not the wise man glory in his \_\_\_\_\_, neither let not the mighty man glory in his \_\_\_\_\_, let not the rich man glory in his \_\_\_\_\_, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ me, that I am the Lord ... ”

6. In **Jeremiah 10:23** the prophet responds: “I know, oh Lord, that the way of man is not in \_\_\_\_\_, it is not in \_\_\_\_\_ that walketh to direct his \_\_\_\_\_.”

7. God speaks again in **Hosea 6:6**, “For I desired \_\_\_\_\_, and not \_\_\_\_\_; and the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ more than \_\_\_\_\_.”

8. **Proverbs 23:23** advises — “Buy the \_\_\_\_\_, and sell it not; buy also \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.”

When it comes to the important things in life we do well to ensure that our beliefs are justified; otherwise the consequences can be tragic. So it is with the issue of seeking and serving God; what is at stake is the opportunity to lead a worthwhile life in God’s sight and to have an even better life in His coming Kingdom. So there is no room for error. The only way to come to the true understanding that God requires of us is through the Bible, and if we are serious we will persevere in studying the Bible that we may come to that knowledge. This task is well within the abilities of any average person; it simply takes time, effort and perseverance. God has promised that He will help us in our efforts to seek Him (Jeremiah 29:13). We are not alone. It is unfortunate that so few people undertake to really know the Bible, for the reward in present satisfaction and future security is out of all proportion to the time and effort which must be expended.

9. Even the apostle Paul who had a far more difficult Christian life than any of us will likely have to undergo, was able to write in **Romans 8:18**— “ I reckon that the \_\_\_\_\_ of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the \_\_\_\_\_ which shall be revealed in us.”

10. What is at stake is made clear in Jesus’ prayer in **John 17:3** — “And this is life eternal, that they might \_\_\_\_\_ thee, the only \_\_\_\_\_ God; and \_\_\_\_\_ whom thou hast sent.”

Our eternal life depends on an accurate knowledge of God and His son.

## **The problem of finding out the truth**

Attitudes towards the Bible vary from ignorance to indifference, on the one hand, to a multitude of contradictory teachings and practices on the other. Many people simply throw up their hands and join a church which is convenient for some personal reason. Others become so disillusioned by the superficiality, confusion and even greed which they find in the religious world that they withdraw from participating in any form of organized religion and may lose their faith entirely.

Christadelphians suggest that the answer is not to be found in either of the above reactions, but in simply devoting the time and effort to finding out for ourselves what the Bible says. Contrary to popular impression, it is not a task which requires a mind of greater than average intelligence, a knowledge of ancient times and languages, or a degree in theology. Neither is it an burdensome duty, but a delightful and satisfying privilege. It just takes an average mind, an elementary ability to read, the right attitude and commitment.

11. The Bible's longest chapter, **Psalms 119**, is an example to us of the man David's intimate familiarity with God's ways, promises and commandments. David says in **verse 97** — "Oh, how I \_\_\_\_\_ thy law! It is my meditation \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_."
12. The importance of love for the scriptures and the value of knowing them are proclaimed time and again in the Bible by God and His servants.
  - a) **Isaiah 66:2** — "But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and \_\_\_\_\_ at my \_\_\_\_\_."
  - b) **2 Timothy 3:15-17** — "And from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures [ i.e. the Old Testament ] which are able to make thee wise unto \_\_\_\_\_ through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All \_\_\_\_\_ is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_, that the man of God may be \_\_\_\_\_, equipped for every \_\_\_\_\_."
  - c) In **Acts 17:11** the people of Berea were commended for the way in which they evaluated the preaching of the apostle Paul. — "For they received the \_\_\_\_\_ with all \_\_\_\_\_ of mind, and searched the \_\_\_\_\_ daily, whether those things were so."

In the same way we must assess the religious teachings that we find in our society.

## **PART 2: Distinctive characteristics of the Christadelphian community**

The remainder of this worksheet comments or enlarges briefly on a few topics of the enclosed Lesson which may not have been covered fully in previous lessons, and in some cases offers further pamphlets to those students who would like to know more about specific subjects.

## ***An apostolic fellowship***

This means that we try to follow the beliefs and practices of the congregations established by the apostles in the first century. Paul exhorts his converts in **2 Thessalonians 2:15**, “so then brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (RSV). Many of Paul’s letters now form part of the Bible. We are to call one another “brother” or “sister”, without a clergy or hierarchy, to follow the New Testament pattern.

13. The Lord Jesus Christ practiced the trade of \_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 6:3) up until the time of His ministry. Paul practiced the trade of \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 18:1-3) even while he was in the mission field, and he exhorted other brethren to follow his example.

The various duties in each Christadelphian congregation are divided among the members according to interest and ability. Brethren are appointed as elders using the criteria outlined by Paul in his letters to Timothy and Titus.

14. The first-century churches met on the first day of every \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 20:7) to break \_\_\_\_\_, and Christadelphians do likewise.

We have other weekly meetings for Sunday school, Bible class and outreach. Expenses are covered by a voluntary collection of baptized members.

The biblical principles which Christadelphians strive to follow normally produce hard-working, responsible, law-abiding citizens. We respect the constituted authorities and cooperate fully with them as long as we are not asked to contravene the commandments of God. This happens infrequently in most democratic countries.

## ***The name “Christadelphians”***

Our name is a compound of two Greek words and means “brethren in Christ.” This phrase is a biblical one, and is used by the apostle Paul in Colossians 1:2 to refer to the believers. Interestingly enough, its use by the Christadelphian community began when the community was required to choose a one-word term in order to identify themselves to the confederate government during the American civil war.

## ***A distinctive foundation***

Early Christadelphians discovered through Bible study that many teachings considered “Christian” were in fact astray from Bible truth, and sought to remedy this situation. This is the reason for our separate existence.

## ***The whole Bible***

The importance Christadelphians give to the Old Testament teaching is questioned by many modern-day Christians, who feel that their faith can be based on the New Testament alone. This point of view was obviously not shared by the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, who preached out of the only Bible they had, the Jewish Bible, which we now call the Old Testament.

We need to realize that though we call it the Old Testament, meaning old covenant, this does not mean that all its teaching is old in the sense that its teaching is outdated and invalid. The “old” covenant, the law of Moses, has been fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ and is not binding upon believers in Christ, certainly. But the Old Testament also contains a great deal of teaching relative to the “new” covenant in Christ Jesus, indeed the fundamental teaching without which we cannot hope to understand the new covenant. Take for example Hebrew prophet Jeremiah who prophesied 600 years before Christ that the “new” covenant was coming:

15. **Jeremiah 31:31** — “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a \_\_\_\_\_ covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers ( the law of Moses ).”

16. Even more surprisingly, the apostle Paul places the origins of the gospel as far back as the time of Abraham, some 1,900 years before Christ, saying in **Galatians 3:8** — “and the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (i.e. gentiles) by faith, preached before the \_\_\_\_\_ unto Abraham saying, ‘In thee shall all the nations be blessed.’”

The new covenant, which is known as the gospel, represents the maturing of the promises made to Abraham and David, which are repeated and expanded throughout the Old Testament.

17. Jesus himself constantly quoted the Old Testament in his arguments with the Jews of his day, and when he wished to explain the most difficult aspect of the gospel, the reason for his crucifixion, to a pair of puzzled disciples, he first of all scolded them by saying in **Luke 24:25, 27** — “oh fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the \_\_\_\_\_ have spoken ... and beginning at \_\_\_\_\_ (the first five books of the Old Testament) and all the prophets, he expounded (i.e. interpreted) unto them in all the \_\_\_\_\_ (the Old Testament) the things concerning himself.”

18. Paul says in **Acts 28:23**, after having converted a group of learned Jews in Rome, that — “he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning \_\_\_\_\_ both out of the law of \_\_\_\_\_, and out of the \_\_\_\_\_, from morning till evening.”

So in our attempts to understand God’s message, let us give to the Old Testament the same respect our Saviour and His servants gave to it.

### **God, Creator and Father**

19. It has been said that God reveals Himself by the things that He has done and the demands He makes on humankind. Thus are manifested His power, purpose and spiritual standards. First among Gods’ works is the creation itself:

a) **Psalms 102:25** — “of old Thou didst lay the foundation of the \_\_\_\_\_, and the heavens are the \_\_\_\_\_ of Thy \_\_\_\_\_.

b) **Romans 1:20** — “ for the invisible things of Him from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are \_\_\_\_\_, even His eternal \_\_\_\_\_ and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”

Interestingly enough, at the end of this twentieth century more and more scientists who are on the cutting edge of scientific discovery are openly recognizing that only the existence of a powerful and wise God can explain the existence of the universe and life on earth.

20. Man is incapable of fully comprehending God’s wisdom, as He says in **Isaiah 55:8-9** — “for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your \_\_\_\_\_ my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are \_\_\_\_\_ than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

21. Nevertheless, by making us in His own image, God has given us a capacity for fellowship with Him, as He indicates in **Isaiah 57:15** — “I dwell in the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ place, with him also that is of a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.”
22. This implies that we have the ability, if we choose to make use of it, to appreciate and emulate in our speech and conduct the qualities which make up God’s holiness.
- a) **Leviticus 19:2** — “Ye shall be \_\_\_\_\_ ; for I the Lord your God am holy.”
- b) **Exodus 19:5-6** — “Now therefore, if you will \_\_\_\_\_ my voice indeed, and keep my \_\_\_\_\_ , then ye shall be to me a \_\_\_\_\_ unto me above all people, ... And ye shall be unto me a \_\_\_\_\_ of priests, and an \_\_\_\_\_ nation.

### **A vital earth**

A fundamental Bible truth which has been obscured is the fact that God’s purpose with men and women is to be worked out right here on earth, and nowhere else. See Lesson #5, *The Kingdom of God on Earth*.

### **Israel in God’s purpose**

Covered in Lesson #3, *Israel – God’s People, God’s Land*.

### **Man is mortal**

The Bible teaching that death is real and that the only way we can live again after death is through the resurrection upon Christ’s return is expounded in the Lesson #7, *After Death – What?*

### **The sacrifice of Jesus**

Covered in Lesson #6, *The Cross of Christ*.

### **The nature of Jesus**

To know the Saviour as He really is, and to understand the way of salvation offered to us by the creator, we must realize that Jesus, who is the only begotten Son of God, is really a man, as the Bible says (For example see: 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 2:22), and not God disguised as a man. More information on these topics can be found in the booklets *Jesus Christ – Son of God, not God the Son* and *Did Jesus Really Come Down From Heaven?*

### **The Devil and Satan**

God created men and women as free mortal beings, endowed with the ability to learn to distinguish between right and wrong and empowered to decide between the two. This is the basis of our responsibility before God.

According to the Bible the perverse impulse to disobey, or sin, is found in the human heart itself and the blame for disobedience is placed firmly upon each person’s own shoulders. Cain, and Cain alone, was blamed for the murder he committed of his brother Abel.

23. In **Genesis 6**, when sin was rampant upon the earth, we are told the reason for this state in **verse 5** — “And GOD saw that the \_\_\_\_\_ of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the \_\_\_\_\_ of his \_\_\_\_\_ was only evil continually.”

In the light of this fundamental principle that sin originates in the heart of man himself, a belief in a supernatural devil or satan is unreasonable. For more study on this topic, request the Bible Study Lessons, *Satan in the Old Testament* and/or *The Devil and Satan in the New Testament*.

### **When Christ returns**

For more information and study on the topic of our Lord and Saviour's return, request the booklet *Christ is coming!*

Congratulations! You have finished the final Lesson of the Bible Study Course. If there are any Worksheets you have not completed from previous Lessons, please feel free to complete them now(or as soon as you are able) and send them to us for review. If you would like a free Booklet or Lesson on the following subjects, please check the appropriate space, and send it to us:

- Angels: God's Messengers
- Did Jesus Christ Really Come Down From Heaven?
- Does God hear Prayer?
- Preparing for Baptism
- Satan and The Devil in the Old and New Testaments (2 Part Lesson)

Subject(s) of your choice:

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If you have any questions or comments about this lesson, or the course in general, please write them out below, and we'll do our best to respond. You can also call us toll-free at 1-888-292-1333 from anywhere in Canada and the United States if you have questions about your lesson or Bible teachings. We would be happy to hear from you. Please remember to print **your name and address** clearly on the top of the first page, and return your completed worksheet to:

### **Comments/Questions/Notes**

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