

# REAL FAITH

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## *Study Notes*

### INTRODUCTION

The Foreword of *Real Faith* opens with these words, “Faith is a journey. A journey towards a deeper understanding of who we are as spiritual beings, a journey into a deeper knowledge of who God is, a journey in which the important questions of life find reasonable answers.” That succinctly sums up the purpose of this study.

It probably would astound us if we knew how many of us had accepted the Christian faith without having a complete understanding of exactly what we had accepted in making that decision. Moving on from there, I wonder how many of us took specific steps to learn the doctrine and the tenets of the Christian Faith, when we became believers? The book, *Real Faith*, along with these study notes, hopefully will go a long way in laying out the answer to the question of “What is the Christian faith?”

Questions are good, necessary and healthy when it comes to investigating any subject; and no more so than Christianity. The Christian faith can withstand any questions thrown at it. During these times of study you should ask all the questions that come to mind, easy or difficult. It is the way we learn and grow in our faith.

As Christians, it is imperative that we know what we believe. We should understand what the pillars of our faith are, the Persons of the Godhead, and exactly what happens at conversion. We should be able to explain the Gospel and have a reasonable understanding of what is expected of us as followers of Jesus. Hopefully, this study will help to put those subjects into perspective.

Each study aligns with the chapters in the book and the questions are taken from the book. Obviously it is necessary to read the related chapter first, before tackling the questions. In a group setting, the questions should engender some good discussion. As you study, I trust God will reveal himself and his Word, and the truth of the Christian faith, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit into your life.









# 3

## WHO IS GOD THE FATHER?

Read chapter three of *Real Faith*.

Read John 17:1-19

### OBJECT OF THE LESSON:

To gain a fresh view of who God is and just how we, as believers, are affected by his attributes and characteristics.

### INTRODUCTION:

To understand and know who God is becomes necessary for our faith to exist. God is the source of all that exists and the foundation of all Christian doctrine. Without that understanding we have nothing upon which to build our faith. It is imperative that we grasp the spiritual concept of God, his attributes and his characteristics. Once we have attained even a fleeting comprehension of who God is, in all his holiness and supremacy, then we will begin to see who we are in comparison.

God created life and sustains it. Without him life would be an unsolvable puzzle. Yet knowing who he is and his relationship with his children brings a sense of security and confidence, unlike anything else. In one sense we might say God is beyond comprehension to our finite minds but he has revealed himself through the pages of Scripture, through which we can come to know him.

This anonymous quotation, “If we worship any concept of God which is non-biblical then we worship an idol” is a definitive and startling statement. It conveys, however, how essential it is that we have a biblical view of God. There is only one God. God said, “I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6). It is to such a God that we are accountable.

### QUESTIONS.

1. What would you say is the common view of God in the world?

2. What would you say is the Christian’s common concept of God?



# 4

## WHO IS GOD THE SON?

Read chapter four of *Real Faith*.

Read John 1:1-18

### OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON:

To understand the deity of Jesus and the purpose of his life, his death, his resurrection and his mission on earth.

### INTRODUCTION:

That Jesus was both God and man is a question sometimes raised, but is truly answered in the affirmative once his life and ministry are examined and understood. The divinity of Jesus was essential for his mission. Likewise his humanness was also necessary for his identification with man. His death would have been ineffective and meaningless for the salvation of mankind if he had not been God.

His life, his death and resurrection are inextricably linked together in the fulfillment of his purpose in coming to earth. He reiterated again and again that he was here to do the will of his Father. That mission was completed with his declaration, "It is finished" on the cross. He had achieved what the Father had sent him to do; which was to remove the dominion, the penalty and the punishment of sin for mankind. All this was to satisfy the wrath of God but at the same time to express his unconditional love for us all.

Jesus did not shrink from the task set before him. The goal had been set; and even in the midst of mental anguish and physical suffering he was faithful to his commitment to bring salvation to those who believe. Ultimately "every knee shall bow" to him and he will be acknowledged as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How is it that the world is ready to accept Jesus as a "good man" or a teacher or a prophet but finds it difficult to accept him as Savior and Lord?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why is the deity of Jesus the critical and essential aspect of his being?













# 7

## WHY IS THE CHRISTIAN LIFE SO DIFFICULT?

Read chapter seven of *Real Faith*.

Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON:

To understand the spiritual warfare which creates obstacles and the difficulties in living out the Christian life.

### INTRODUCTION:

Coming to faith in Christ does not guarantee life to be a “bed of roses.” In fact it could be just the opposite. Because the new believer now lives under different spiritual and life principles, the new life tends to bring about conflict which was never there before. It is quickly discovered that there is an enemy who attempts to distract, detract and destroy the new-found faith.

Authentic faith will always be challenged and opposed. This confirms a genuine faith because why would our faith be a threat if it were not real? Then there is the inward struggle with temptation and sin which we all experience. None of us are immune to sin but are assured of forgiveness upon confession. As we progress in our spiritual walk we discover that the domination of sin in our lives is no longer a reality. Although we can never attain sinless perfection, we are given the grace and strength to overcome – even if we fail to avail ourselves of it at times.

As believers, we are given the Holy Spirit who grants us power and lives out the characteristics of his fruit in our lives. We are also called upon to don the armor of God to ward off the attacks of the enemy, as well as arm ourselves with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, alongside the power of prayer to overcome strongholds within our lives and the life of the Church. The obstacles are real but so is the victory!

### QUESTIONS:

1. Is it true to say that life will always be difficult for the Christian? Explain.

2. How much persecution do we experience in the West?



# 8

## WHAT THEN IS OUR MOTIVATION?

Read chapter eight of *Real Faith*.

Read 1 Corinthians 13.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON:

To realize that our major motive in living the Christian life is love, which, when understood, will ultimately lead to the glory of God.

### INTRODUCTION:

We all need motivation at some point in our lives. We need it particularly in our Christian walk when we go through adversity. There are times when nothing seems to go right, situations become difficult and even people become difficult. How is it, at those times, that we keep ourselves motivated to move forward on our spiritual journey?

All hardships are not to our detriment and in fact, some bring good into our lives. Although we may be disciplined by our heavenly Father, it is only because of, and out of, his love for us. God's love sanctifies, strengthens and disciplines. When we begin to recognize the unconditional aspect of God's love, then we find ourselves motivated to love and serve him in response.

This motivation compels us to worship, to serve, to love, to sacrifice and respond to all that God gives to us. From salvation to our daily blessings we are recipients of his love. We love God because he first loved us. His love is poured into our hearts so that we might love him, love one another and show his love to the world.

### QUESTIONS:

1. Are we motivated to walk the Christian life by God's demands or by our response to him?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. As believers what is our greatest motivator and why?





# 9

## WHAT DO OUR FACES SHOW?

Read chapter nine in *Real Faith*.

Read Galatians 5:13-26

### OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that our faces show more about our character and Christian testimony, than our words do.

### INTRODUCTION:

Unless you can truly be a “poker-faced” person, your face will tell a story. Our faces can be read. It is hard to hide what is going on inside of us. When we are sad, it shows. When we are happy, it shows. Our countenance betrays our feelings, be they good or bad. As believers we need to remember that our Christian faith is often portrayed by our faces.

It is difficult to testify that our experience is “joy in the Lord” when our faces tell a different story. Our face is our first introduction to others. It is our face which makes a first impression and that is the one which counts. A Christian is often recognized by the joy on their face and a deep sense of peace about their personality.

It would be unrealistic to infer that we always have a bright smile – life is not like that, even for the Christian. Life circumstances influence our demeanor. However, as we seek to rest and trust implicitly in the sovereignty of God, we can be assured that the deep-seated confidence and assurance will show through, in spite of changing situations in our lives.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What do you understand as the difference between happiness and joy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Is it really possible to have joy even going through trials and difficulties? Explain your reasoning.



# 10

## WHAT IS PORTRAYED BY OUR ATTITUDE?

Read chapter ten of *Real Faith*.

Read Galatians 5:13-26

### OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON:

To learn that, because we are representatives of the kingdom of Christ, our attitude to others is critically important.

### INTRODUCTION:

Character is important. It virtually becomes our badge of identification. We become known for our character. Even non-believers like to know that their character is seen as upright and honorable. Although our characters are shaped by many influences in our lives, for Christians it is further influenced by our faith. We develop our character through reading, learning, listening, observing and heeding the teaching we receive. As we allow the work of God's Spirit upon our lives, he shapes us and molds us into people whose character demonstrates that we are followers of Jesus.

A good Christian character will be the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit displaying his fruit through us. The characteristics of Christ will then be seen in our characters. The love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness and all the other aspects of this fruit will confirm that it is not us, but Christ who lives within us.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How do we recognize God's goodness to us?

2. How do we express that goodness to others?

3. Explain the difference between faith as a gift of the Spirit and faith as a fruit of the Spirit.

4. What motivates our faithfulness to God, to the Christian faith, and to others?

5. How essential is self-control in the life of the believer? Why is that?

6. How can we give more freedom to God's Spirit to display his fruit in our lives?

## WHAT THEN IS EXPECTED OF US?

Read chapter eleven of *Real Faith*.

Read Romans 12:1-21

### OBJECTIVE OF THE LESSON:

To understand our calling in Christ as his children, particularly in a world which has basically become non-Christian.

### INTRODUCTION:

True Christians must be different and must seem to be different. If there is no distinction between believer and non-believer, then the authenticity of faith must be challenged. Becoming a Christian brings with it a radical change of heart and, usually, a change in lifestyle. Living for Christ carries a much higher spiritual expectation than many people are willing to acknowledge.

We live at a time in Christendom when there is a call to make the gospel more easily available, to make it more palatable; but in so doing, an element of compromise has crept in. The standard of the Christian faith is high and should remain so. The call to holiness is out of anyone's natural reach. This sets it apart from any simple acceptance of man-made philosophies and concepts. Yet the believer is not left alone in seeking to achieve this high standard. The Christian understands that his or her responsibility is in commitment – yet the attainment of such a high standard is impossible without the ministry of God's Spirit in the life of the believer. The expectation is therefore twofold. One is to be set apart or to be spiritually different and two, to offer a sacrificial commitment to living a life as a true follower of Jesus.

### QUESTIONS:

1. What is our responsibility towards other believers? Is it optional?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What do you think is our primary responsibility as believers?

