

## ***What Are You Looking For in A Church?***

Because they have moved into a new community, or have awakened to the need for religion in their lives, or are unhappy with "their old church," many people are "looking" for a "new church home." What are they looking for? What are you looking for?

- (1) Some, following family and personal traditions, look for a church like the one they left behind.
- (2) Because they don't want to travel far to "attend services," some look for a church nearby.
- (3) Desiring to feel welcome and wanted, some look for a church with "friendly people."
- (4) Some look for a big church, where they can get lost in the crowd. Others look for a small church, where they can quickly get to know everybody.
- (5) Some look for a church with many "youth activities" and "family affairs."
- (6) Some want a church that is trying to "solve world problems," committed to social reform and community improvement.

Now, if you will look back over that list, you will notice that nothing is said about seeking a church where they can worship and serve God according to His revealed will. Many people are looking for a church that pleases them, rather than a church that pleases God. If you are interested in finding a church that pleases God, look for the following characteristics:

- (1) A church that respects the sovereignty of God and the authority of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
- (2) A church that respects the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and the gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation.
- (3) A church that strives to be like the churches in the New Testament - in name, organization, teaching, work and worship.
- (4) A church that is concerned about lost souls and eternal destinies.
- (5) A church that, instead of catering to their social desires, puts its emphasis on the spiritual needs of men.

We purpose to "speak where the Bible speaks, and be silent where it is silent." We would be happy to have you visit any of our assemblies to check us out.

*- by James E. Cooper*

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## ***True Life***

The goal of the gospel is to prepare people for heaven. Its emphasis centers upon happiness in a life to come rather than upon this life. "For what profit is it to a man," Jesus once asked, "if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" The Lord would teach us to look through faith beyond the suffering and heartaches of this life to a life free of suffering and heartaches; to lay up treasures in heaven rather than upon the earth. He wants us in our preaching to proclaim a message of salvation through His blood, to bring to people's consideration those things that are eternal. But when we succeed in leading men and women to surrender their lives in favor of the life to come, we lead them into gaining, not only heaven, but also the peace and contentment that make for real happiness upon this earth. "He who finds his life shall lose it," Jesus said, "and he who loses his life for my sake shall find it."

*- by Bill Hall*

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## ***Born Again***

Have you wondered about the phrase which describes certain individuals as "born again Christians"? What does that mean any way? Is a "born again Christian" in some way different than other Christians? And how exactly does a person get that way?

While the words "born again" and "Christian" are certainly found in the Bible, it is of note that they are never found together as the popular usage has it today. In fact, the phrase "born again Christian" is obviously redundant. Every person who is a Christian has, of necessity, been born again. This becomes apparent as we examine the rebirth that is described in the Scriptures.

Jesus first introduced the idea of being born again in John 3:3-5. He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". When asked for an explanation, He added, "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God". Many have wondered as to what exactly Jesus meant when He spoke of the role of water and the Spirit in the new birth. Other passages shed valuable light on this matter.

In I Peter 1:23, we read once more of being "born again". Here Peter says we are, "born again . . . by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever". Knowing that the Holy Spirit caused the inspired word to be written, we have thus discovered the work of the Spirit in this rebirth. His work is found in the instructions of the Scriptures which lead us to obey the Lord.

But what about the water? Look to Romans 6:4 ... "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." There is the water; it is the water of baptism, from which we rise to "walk in newness of life". Now, think for a moment: "newness of life", that phrase speaks to us of a new birth, of being "born again".

And so we have it, what it takes to be "born again", "born of water and the Spirit"; it is to be instructed by God's holy word, and to be obedient to its commands, including baptism in water.

Have you been "born again"? Or, perhaps even more simply, are you really a Christian? There is nothing mysterious about the process, as some would have you to believe. Instead, you can be born again just as every other true Christian has ever been, by learning God's law, and obeying His commands.

**- by Greg Gwin**