

LESSON 3 What God Wants You to Be and Do

Have you learned to ride a bicycle? If so, you know that as a learner you had to remember to do many things at the same time. You had to push the pedals and guide the handlebars, while keeping your balance and obeying the rules of the road. These are things that the expert rider does without thinking, but you could not do them easily.

How, then, did you learn to ride? Most likely you had an expert rider helping you. Probably he or she explained what you had to do and how to obey the rules of the road. Perhaps he got on the bicycle and showed you what to do. When you tried for yourself, did you fall down? Because the trainer understood, he or she probably helped you by holding on to the bicycle until you could balance.

God desires that we all become like Him, but we cannot just start living that way on our own when we become Christians. This lesson shows how God, the expert, can help you become more like Him.

The Plan

- A. A Conscience to Help You
- B. The Bible to Guide You
- C. A Savior to Show You
- D. The Holy Spirit to Lead You

The Goals

- 1. Explain how your conscience helps you become a better Christian.
- 2. Describe how the Bible is your guide in living a Christian life.
- 3. Discuss how Jesus is your example as well as your Lord and Savior.
- 4. State the work of the Holy Spirit in leading you into a Christlike life.

A. A CONSCIENCE TO HELP YOU

Goal 1. Explain how your conscience helps you become a better Christian.

Every person has a conscience, an inner awareness about what is good and right. Even before you became a Christian, your conscience gave you some guidance about what was right and wrong. You had a feeling inside, and you knew that you should or should not do a certain act. If you took notice of your conscience, you avoided many sinful deeds and perhaps did many right deeds. The apostle Paul explains this when he speaks of the Gentiles, who did not know God's laws but were doing good because of those inner feelings. He says,

Their conduct shows that what the Law commands is written in their hearts. Their consciences also show that this is true, since their thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them. (Romans 2:15)

Conscience is a gift from God to help us. We might say that it is a spiritual sense of balance. But like our natural sense of balance, our conscience is limited and imperfect. The best acrobat or rider sometimes falls because his sense of balance fails. Just so, the best of people fall into sin because their conscience is not sufficient to hold them. Some even make their conscience useless by repeatedly refusing to listen to it. The Bible talks of people “whose consciences are dead, as if burnt with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2).

But the conscience of true Christians is not like that, for being born again means to have a new mind and conscience. The writer to the Hebrews encourages us by showing that Christ’s death makes our consciences right. “His blood will purify our consciences from useless rituals, so that we may serve the living God” (Hebrews 9:14).

Because Christ purifies our hearts and forgives us, our consciences do not make us feel guilty about past sins any more. Instead, our consciences become a tool of the Holy Spirit to assure us that we are acting right. Therefore, the writer to the Hebrews urges, “Keep on praying for us. We are sure we have a clear conscience, because we want to do the right thing at all times” (Hebrews 13:18).

A quiet conscience is a clear conscience (1 Peter 3:16). Paul’s advice to Timothy is great encouragement and a strong warning: “Keep your faith and a clear conscience. Some men have not listened to their conscience and have made a ruin of their faith” (1 Timothy 1:19).

Application

- 1 Circle the letter for the TRUE statements about conscience.
 - a) Only non-Christians have consciences.
 - b) Christ renews the Christian’s conscience.
 - c) A renewed conscience is a tool of the Holy Spirit.
 - d) Conscience can never be wrong.
 - e) A Christian should keep a clear conscience.

2 Write the following verse in your notebook, memorize it, and use it as a guide. “I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man” (Acts 24:16).

B. THE BIBLE TO GUIDE YOU

Goal 2. Describe how the Bible is your guide in living a Christian life.

In the last lesson you learned about the Bible as part of the way God revealed himself. You remember that the Old Testament records God’s dealings with individuals and with the nation of Israel. God chose to show His character and His way in that manner. The New Testament contains an account of the way God revealed himself most fully—in Jesus Christ. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus and give His teaching. Acts continues the story. The Epistles explain the teaching, and Revelation speaks of the victorious end of the story.

When the Bible has so many important things to tell us, it is easy to see why we need the whole Scripture. Yet many people, even Christians, do not understand why God has made His Word available to us today. The apostle Paul answers, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16).

God gave us the Scriptures to teach us the truth, the right things about the true God and our new life in Christ. This way, we will not be ignorant of His expectations. The teaching of the Bible will guide us. All the knowledge of the Bible is of little use if we do not let it change our attitudes and actions to be like God’s.



King David had great respect for the Word of God. He wrote, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. I have taken an oath and confirmed it, that I will follow your righteous laws” (Psalm 119:105–106). The Bible is the all-sufficient guide for the Christian. It contains instructions, rules to be obeyed, and patterns of behavior that help us behave ethically.

Finally, the Bible gives us examples of real people obeying or rebelling against God’s rules. There is never any doubt which biblical examples God wants us to copy. The good inspire us to please God; the bad warn us against feelings and actions which would displease God.

The Word of God is very practical and real. If we are to live God’s way, we have to be practical and know God’s Word. Knowing God’s Word requires a desire to obey and discipline to study. The psalmist writes,

I rejoice in following your statutes as one
rejoices in great riches. I meditate on your
precepts and consider your ways. I delight in
your decrees; I will not neglect your word.
(Psalm 119:14–16)

Application

3 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.

- a)** The Bible is inspired by God for your good.
- b)** The Bible is useful for teaching the truth.
- c)** The Bible is given to equip the Christian to deal with life.
- d)** The Bible is only a list of things you must not do.
- e)** The Bible is full of good instructions and patterns for living.

4 Memorize and study one of the three Scripture passages given in this section. Be prepared to explain this verse to anyone who asks about why the Bible is important to you.



C. A SAVIOR TO SHOW YOU

Goal 3. Discuss how Jesus is your example as well as your Lord and Savior.

The most valuable example that the Bible offers us is our Lord Jesus Christ. Probably you tell others that Jesus is your Savior. Perhaps you think of Him constantly as your Lord. This is right and good. How could you have experienced new life without salvation? How could you go on living without the Lord in control? Only Jesus is able to save and keep, when we ask Him into our hearts. Jesus is Christ, and you are a Christian—a follower of Christ, one of His disciples. A disciple is one who learns to think and act like his or her master.

Did you ever play a game called “Follow the Leader”? One person does a series of actions—jumping, bending, walking—and the others have to do their best to copy the leader’s movements. If you cannot copy him or her, or are the slowest to do so, then you lose. That game is built on imitation.

The idea of imitation is throughout the Bible. Paul writes, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). He also advises,

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: . . . he humbled himself and became obedient. (Philippians 2:5, 8)

Jesus showed His character by His obedience. Peter summed this up when he preached that Jesus “went around doing good and healing . . . because God was with him” (Acts 10:38). Peter knew Jesus’ character because he had been with Him.

Recall, also, how the members of the Council were amazed to see the boldness of Peter and John, especially since these disciples were ordinary men of no education. The Council realized then that Peter and John had been companions of Jesus (Acts 4:13).

This shows the importance of studying biblical examples. It is not enough to know the stories of Jesus in the Gospels. You need to copy the godly examples of Jesus and others in Scripture. This will not be easy. But Peter notes, “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

God certainly wants us to become more like Him every day, but we are not up to His standard yet (Philippians 3:12). Here is a marvelous promise:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:2–3)

Application

5 Circle the letters of the statements which describe things we should do to imitate Jesus.

- a)** We must love God with all our heart.
- b)** We must tell the good news to the poor.
- c)** We must help those who are in trouble.
- d)** We must let the Spirit of God work in us.
- e)** We must all become carpenters.

6 Read 1 Corinthians 11:1 again. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you ways in which you are not imitating Christ. Ask God to forgive you and to help you change. List these in your notebook and pray each day that you may become more like Jesus. When the Holy Spirit has helped you change something on your list, draw a line through it and write what you have learned.



D. THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LEAD YOU

Goal 4. State the work of the Holy Spirit in leading you into a Christlike life.

Many of God's children have not made progress in becoming Christlike as they have not overcome their old sins and bad habits. They confess their sin sincerely but continue to fall. However, our expert teacher, the Holy Spirit, is available to help us. We must ask Him for help each day and proceed with confidence in becoming more like Jesus.

The disciples of Jesus were His followers for three years. Jesus taught them many things and showed them His example. But He knew that when He went away, they would need help. So He promised, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me" (John 15:26). Earlier, Jesus said, "The Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit teaches and reminds us of what we have learned. He brings the Scriptures to our mind when we need them (See Mark 13:11.). His job is to lead us into all the truth (John 16:13), and that includes the way we are to live. As we let the Spirit help us, we can overcome the desires of our human nature. God's nature can be shown in us, but only as we follow the Holy Spirit's leading. Read what the apostle Paul wrote about this:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. . . . Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
(Galatians 5:22–23, 25)

The Holy Spirit must control our lives. Does that mean we do not have to make any effort? Of course not! It means that we must not keep trying to avoid God's way. We must think about

our attitudes and actions, and ask the Spirit to change them to be like Christ's. That is His leading into all truth.

Does this seem hard? Consider for a moment what God has already done in you. It was the Holy Spirit who helped you become a Christian. The Spirit gave you life. By His power you became a child of God. You experienced that God is real, and He forgave your sins. Your conscience was renewed. You were given a purpose for living, and every day God your Father answers your prayers. All this happens because the Holy Spirit is working in you, as He is in your Christian brothers and sisters.

We have no cause to fear that we will fail. What the Bible tells us, we can also know by personal experience:

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. (Romans 8:14-16)

Application

7 After each statement below, write the scripture reference for where the statement is found.

- a)** The Spirit leads us.
.....
- b)** The Spirit has given us life.
.....
- c)** The Spirit reveals the truth about God.
.....
- d)** The Spirit helps us remember Christ's words.
.....
- e)** The Spirit produces a Christlike character in us.
.....

8 Paul prayed this prayer and we pray it for you also. Write your name on the blank spaces, and pray it yourself.

I,, ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give the Spirit, who will make wise and reveal God to
. so that. 's mind may be opened to see the light . . . and how very great is His power at work in us who believe (Ephesians 1:17–19).



Check Your Answers

- 5 Statements **a)**, **b)**, **c)**, and **d)** are correct.
- 1 Statements **b)**, **c)**, and **e)** are true.
- 6 Your answer
- 2 Your answer
- 7 **a)** Romans 8:14
b) Galatians 5:25
c) John 15:26
d) John 14:26
e) Galatians 5:22–23
- 3 Statements **a)**, **b)**, **c)**, and **e)** are true.
- 8 Your name goes in the blanks.
- 4 Your answer

