

This is a new series, basically written for those who are Christians and who feel that they would like to have a deeper relationship with God. It is also intended to encourage those who have received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to step out and use the gifts that God has given to them.

**1. Descriptions of a 'Normal Christian' according to Non-Christians**

If I were to go into town on a Saturday and spend the morning asking people to give their description of a Christian, the following answers would generally be included:-

*A religious person, good person, church attender, Christian parents, read the Bible, pray, give money to charity.*

People do not always recognize the difference between those who are professing Christians and those of other faiths, so for instance, 'Church goer' could be someone attending a group but it might be another faith group or a cult and not necessarily a Christian denomination. Sometimes a good living, honest person is labelled as a Christian, yet may not actually have any interest at all in Christian beliefs.

**2. Descriptions of a 'Normal Christian' according to Christians.**

First of all, what is a Christian? There are quite a number of different denominations that use this word 'Christian'. Their styles of services and worship may be different, but if they are Christian denominations then their basic description of a Christian is, '*Someone who is a follower of Jesus Christ.*' A definite decision by individuals is made to try and live their lives with Jesus as their example. The answers given above by Non-Christians also generally apply to those who have made a definite commitment. Denominations may vary in their wording of this act of commitment and may include:- '*Saved, born again, child of God or converted.*' All of these are describing a Christian. Jesus Himself said, "***Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.***" (John 3:3)

Would this group of Christians add more to their definition of a normal Christian? Yes, they would probably add attending a Prayer Meeting of some sort, either with one or two others or as a church group. A mid-week Bible Study would likely be included. They would see that their children attend a Sunday School or church Youth Group.

Would these additions complete their church related activities? In many, many churches sadly this would be the case. It is quite common for Christians to be spiritually satisfied by attending a service that includes prayer, singing hymns and choruses and listening to a preacher. They feel that they are living a good Christian life as God expects of them. They are comfortable. Changes of any sort - even different chair arrangements – are not always welcome! A line is drawn under their regular spiritual input/output because that is as far as they wish to go, or alternatively, may be as far as they have been taught and understand what is available and what the Christian life is really all about.

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Is there more to being a Christian than this? Has God other ideas up His sleeve that He wants us to

experience? Well, He most certainly has. For anything to do with our Christian walk, the Bible is our source of information. ***'All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.'*** (2 Timothy 3:6) The Bible is God's written Word that has been given to us in order to be our constant guide. It contains everything that we need to know in order to fulfil God's purpose for our lives. So, what is the Bible's description of a 'normal Christian'?

### **3. Descriptions of a 'Normal Christian' according to the Bible.**

During the life of Jesus on earth, people became Christians and became His followers. Both during His life on earth and also after He died and had gone back to Heaven, the life of Christians took a completely new turn. Things began to happen that had not previously regularly occurred. God showed His power in ways that were unbelievable. The teaching and actions of Jesus pointed to a God of the present, not just of the past or someone far away and unreachable. Healings took place on an unprecedented level. ***'All those who had any that were sick with various diseases, brought them to Jesus and he laid His hands on every one of them and healed them.'*** (Luke 4:40) Notice that **ALL** of them were healed, not just one or two! One of the most interesting things to note is that it was not only Jesus through whom people were being healed, God was using ordinary people like you and I. ***'Peter said to the lame man, "I have no silver or gold, but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." He took him by the right hand and raised him up and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.'*** (Acts 3: 6-7) Unexpected miracles happened, yet this was just the beginning. Whatever was God making available?

### **The Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

After Jesus had returned to Heaven there was a major breakthrough in the life of Christians. Followers of Jesus experienced the 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit'. Nothing like this had previously been seen. Jesus had said that this would happen but had not described how it was to happen. The first recording of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is on the day of Pentecost, that we can read about in Acts 2. There were about 120 people praying together and waiting for something that Jesus had promised, even though they were not at all sure what that 'something' was going to be. The result was that **ALL OF THOSE CHRISTIANS RECEIVED THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPOKE IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN THEIR NATIVE TONGUE.** This set the pattern of normality for those who became and who are still becoming Christians today. The Holy Spirit comes into our lives when we accept Jesus as our Saviour, but that is only the start. At the Baptism of the Holy Spirit we are swamped with His Spirit and empowered to use the gifts of the Spirit we are then given in order to uplift, edify, and encourage our fellow Christians. This is the Biblical description of 'Normal Christians'.

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**A question:** Have you received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit? If not can I encourage you to pray and pray and pray until you receive this precious gift that God has for you. Do not give up until you reach a breakthrough.

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**Growing Strong 2 – A closer look at the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Part 1)**