

What a Christian is

Imagine someone says to you: "How do I become a Christian? What does it involve? How did you do it?" What would you say?

Read 1 Thessalonians 1 v 9-10

- ❓ *What three things marked out these Thessalonian Christians?*
 - v 9: T.....
 - v 9: S.....
 - v 10: W.....
- ❓ *What was Paul therefore confident that Jesus would do for them (v 10)?*

So, becoming a Christian involves a 1-2-3...

One

- ❓ *What do we have to turn from (v 9)?*

Everyone worships something. Everyone treats something or someone as where they will find ultimate life and satisfaction. Whenever we break God's law, it is because we are listening to the idea that obeying the demands of something else will make our lives better, now or in the future. That thing becomes a substitute god—an idol.

So Christianity begins, and continues, by us turning from idols. We must never think we can enjoy the blessings of both the living God and our idols. We must turn from the empty promises of the latter to find the true fulfilment of the former.

Two

- ❓ *What is our attitude to God (v 9b)?*

Becoming a Christian is not making a transaction, like going to a cashpoint: *I say this prayer/enter my PIN, and out comes salvation/*

some cash. No—it is changing our identity. We become servants—servants of the true God, committed to seeking to live his way rather than serving ourselves or our idols.

Three

- ❓ *What are we waiting for (v 10)? Why?*

Becoming a Christian means realising that, throughout this life, your best days lie ahead of you. It means looking towards eternity without fear, because we know what it holds—and we know that it does not hold what we deserve. There should be wrath—God's judgment on our idolatry, our spiritual adultery. Instead there is Jesus, who rescues us from that wrath so he can rule us for eternity. Christian people are waiting people—but we are busy people, because we have a God to serve while we wait for his Son.

Apply

- ❓ *What wrong attitudes would you have if (or do you have when) you forget 1, or 2, or 3?*
- ❓ *If you were concerned by your spiritual healthcheck, then have you, or will you: Turned? Served? Waited?*

Pray

Thank God for the life he has brought you into. Pray that you will wait well, turning and serving until Jesus comes from heaven.