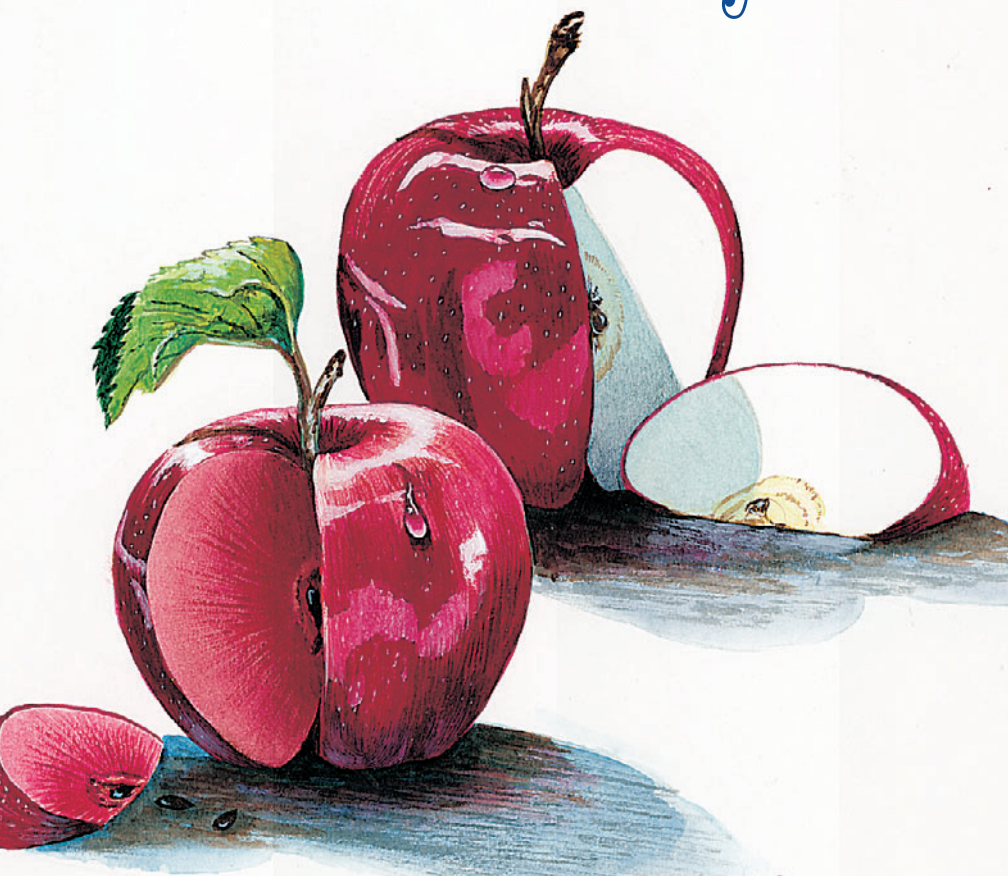


# Native New Day

19




## Traditional Religions and Superstitions

Often Native Christians have been called “apples,” meaning, like apples they are red on the outside but white on the inside. Some say that Native people who

believe in Christianity are following the white man's religion, so they are red on the outside but white, like a white man, on the inside.

However, it's not accurate to say Christianity is a white man's religion. The Lord tells us that in the beginning He created "man," not a "white man." Indians and Eskimos, like all the different races, have a special place in God's plan. Each culture has different talents and gifts that can be used to bless others, not only today but throughout eternity (Revelation 5:9–10). People of all cultures are unique and precious to our Creator.

ative people have always been  
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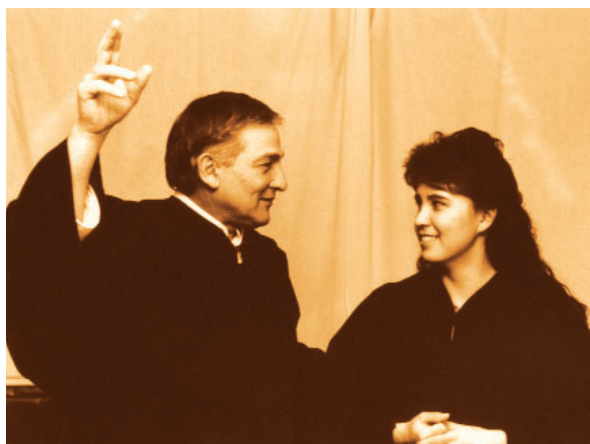
Christianity was never meant just for Jewish people or for white people. Whenever the Bible teaches any principle, it is always for everyone. "Whoever" is the term the Bible uses when it speaks of those to whom Jesus offers eternal life (Revelation 22:17; John 3:16).

The wonderful thing about biblical Christianity is that, when its principles are followed, any culture is enriched and blessed because of it. True religion centers not only on the hope the teachings of Christianity give us, but also on how we relate to one another within our culture.

Native people have always believed in holding on to that which is good and adding to their culture those

things that make it better. The problem has been that Christian teachings have often come to us through white men who mixed their own culture and tradition with religion. Native people were often made to feel that if they accepted Christianity they also had to practice the ways of the white man. Unfortunately, many times the message our people heard was that all ties with our traditional lifestyle had to be cut off and left behind in order to be a true Christian. As a result we were deprived of self-respect, because it made many of us feel that everything about ourselves was either wrong, bad, or inferior. God never intended this misfortune to happen. The error was in how the message was given, not in the message itself.

The principles of Christianity give us lifestyles to hold dear. They help us to know the most exciting and fulfilling way of living within our culture.



**O**ften, Christianity has come to us through white men who mixed their own culture and traditions with religion. The error was in how the message was given, not in the message itself.

**Key Thought.** Native people have always been spiritual people. We can be rightfully proud of our rich heritage. We are proud of how our spirituality is tied to our culture and ways of looking at life. Today one of the greatest discoveries we can make is to see that true principles of Christianity will only strengthen and enhance our wonderful cultural values.

This lesson will make clear that our great cultural values are not to be cast aside; they will become even richer and more powerful by the principles of Christianity. Each section in this lesson presents the basic Bible teachings of God that broaden our understanding and enhance many of our traditional spiritual beliefs and practices.



**O**ur great cultural values become even more powerful by the true principles of Christianity.

Christ helps us to sharpen our sense of what is right or wrong. He tells us: (1) how to treat each other, and (2) how to allow God to change us for the better as we prepare for eternity.

God never asks us to give up anything that isn't for our own good. The Bible points out things that are wrong, things that allow the Devil and his demons to harass our lives and steer us into ways of unhappiness and destruction.

So far we have studied several basic scriptural truths.

This lesson will review these basic principles which give guidelines for making us better people within our cultural identity.

## BIBLE ANSWERS

**1. We are to honor Christ as our Creator. Who created all things? John 1:1-3, 14.** (Circle one.) (1) Good angels. (2) Jesus. *(All quotations from the Bible in these lessons are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.)*



**Note.** The Bible teaches that there are three members of the Godhead—God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). All three are in perfect harmony and can be referred to as “the Godhead” or

Trinity. The world was created by God the Son (Ephesians 3:9). It is important for us to understand that since Jesus is the Creator of us all, He could die on the cross as a substitute for us all. Christ has always existed as God and will always exist. He called Himself “I Am” (John 8:58), which means that He has existed and will exist through all eternity.

**2. God is our “Re-Creator.” Who only can make us truly good people? 2 Corinthians 5:17–18.** “Therefore, if anyone is in \_\_\_\_\_, he is a new creation. . . . Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.” (See also 2 Corinthians 4:16.)



**B**y opening our lives daily to Christ through prayer and commitment we will experience the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

**Note.** When we “open” our lives daily to Christ through prayer and submission to Him as our Lord, we will experience the work of the Holy Spirit in our life and lifestyle. The Holy Spirit will change us. We will grow to hate the things we once loved that aren’t good for us. Christ will teach us to love the things that are good for us, which we may not have appreciated before. We will



come to the place that we will be able to say, “I have discovered that I can do all things I should be doing through Christ who strengthens me.” (See Philippians 4:13.)

God wants to work many changes within us. Just as we have inherited good things from our ancestors, we have also inherited many bad tendencies. In His creative power through the Spirit, God can help take away these inherited weaknesses.

**3. Following God’s commandments brings happiness, harmony, peace, and order to our lives. How can we be truly happy within our culture in this life? Proverbs 29:18, last part.** “Happy is he who keeps the \_\_\_\_\_.” (See also James 1:25.)



**Note.** God’s Ten Commandments bring happiness to us when obeyed. Their underlying principles will do two things for us: First, they will keep us close to Christ so He can give us strength and true peace. Second, they will help us know how to treat one another so we can be a blessing to others. Should any philosophy or traditional teaching take away from these principles, you can be sure there is no light or spiritual benefit from them.

**4. Our only way of eternal salvation is through Jesus. How only can we be saved? Acts 4:12.** (Circle one.)  
(1) By good works. (2) Through Christ. (3) By praying.



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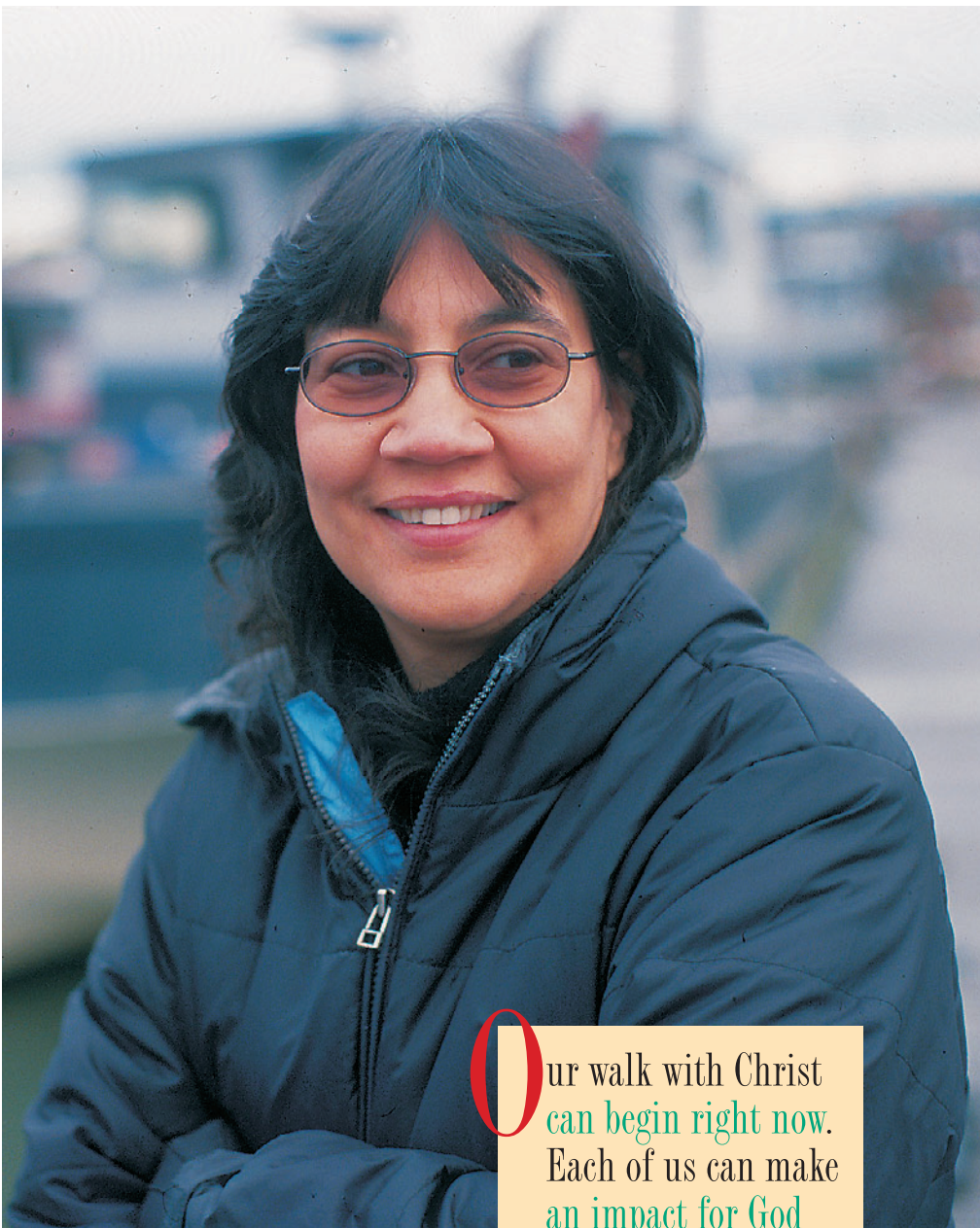
rusting in Jesus brings  
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a purpose to our lives.

**Note.** Only Christ, our Savior and Creator, can save us for eternity; we cannot save ourselves. Jesus came to this earth from heaven. He took on humanity and lived the way you and I should live. During the 33 years He was on the earth, He lived a perfect life day by day, depending on His heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit (John 3:34; 5:19; 14:10; Luke 4:17-18; Acts 1:2).

Because of His perfect life, Jesus earned the right as our Creator to substitute His life for all of our imperfect lives. He earned the right to forgive us and make us righteous. All this is offered to us if we will in simple faith and in true sincerity say, “Yes, I want and accept Your life in place of mine and Your strength to live righteously.”

**5. The second coming of Jesus will bring an end to all sin. What promise does Christ make to all who follow Him? John 14:1-3.** “Let not your heart be troubled; . . . I will \_\_\_\_\_ again and receive you.”





**O**ur walk with Christ  
can begin right now.  
Each of us can make  
an impact for God  
in our world.

**Note.** This promise is called “The Lord’s Promise,” because Christ promises to come back to this earth again and deliver us from evil and its results (Matthew 1:21; John 6:38-40). At the appointed time, He will appear in the skies with all of His holy angels. Then, along with those who are resurrected at that time, we will be caught up and taken to the place called heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; John 14:1-3). Jesus not only gives us peace in





this life, but He also gives us the hope of His coming again to deliver us from this wicked world. We have something to look forward to.

As people observe the wickedness around them today, they often wonder what will eventually happen to this old world. Will man's sinfulness come to the place that he will destroy himself? What hope do they and their children have in the future? The second coming of



Christ is the Christian's great hope and encouragement. We can have peace today knowing God's plan for each of us personally.

**6. The righteous dead know life again only when Jesus comes the second time. What is God's plan for believers who have died before His second coming? 1 Thessalonians 4:16, last part.** "And the dead in Christ will \_\_\_\_\_ first." (Read also verses 13-18.)



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hat hope do we and our children have in the future? We can have peace knowing God's love and plan for each of us personally.

**Note.** God plans to resurrect the dead in Christ at the second coming of Christ. It isn't His plan that when we die we go off into another life if we are good or to a place of punishment if we are bad. When we die, we remain in our graves until the second coming (John 11:11-14). We are not conscious as we await the second coming of Christ. The Bible calls death a "sleep." God wants the world to know that there are no spirits of dead people haunting our houses and land. He wants us to know that if anyone says they have seen the dead come back to speak to them, this is simply the deceptive work of Satan and his angels (Ecclesiastes 9:5).

God doesn't want us to be led into falsely thinking that we can have communication with the dead. He wants to protect us from devil harassment in every way He can.



**7. God plans to destroy death forever and restore our land back to its original condition as it was in the beginning. What reward is promised to the faithful? Mark 10:30, last part. We will receive . . . “in the age to come, \_\_\_\_\_.”** (Read also Revelation 22:1-5.)

**Note.** There are many legends and superstitions about the future. Many religions teach that death is the end of our existence or that the dead go to live in another existence. But the Bible teaches that only when the Lord comes will we who have trusted in Him be given life eternal.





The Bible tells us that the deserts and the wastelands of this earth will be restored to their original beauty. Not only will our country be given back to us, but also our health will be restored. At that time the eyes of the blind will be opened and the deaf will hear again. The lame man will run, and the tongues of those who could not speak will be released (Revelation 21:1-7; Isaiah 35:1-7).

**L**ike the Pink Pearl apple, we can be true Christians and totally Native—not only in our appearance, but also in our cultural beliefs and practices.

**Closing Thought.** When it comes to analyzing whether certain religious ways of thinking are right or wrong, we must ask these questions:

- (1) Will these teachings about spiritual things bring hope to me today and in the future?
- (2) Do these teachings make me a better person? Have they strengthened my role as a helper to those in need of spiritual help? Will other people be blessed because of my life and actions?
- (3) Are spiritual traditions or my religion teaching me to be lovingly obedient to God's Ten Commandments? "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20).



Do the spiritual traditions and religion you follow offer you happiness and security today? The above questions will help to identify true religion.

If we follow these spiritual guidelines, we will be like the magnificent apple species, the “Pink Pearl.” This apple is not only red on the outside, but it is also red on the inside. It is a unique species of apple that is loaded with flavor and usefulness. Like the Pink Pearl apple, we can be true Christians and totally Native, not only in our appearance, but also in our cultural religious beliefs and practices.

**Next Lesson.** The Lord tells us how to remember Him as our “Creator” and “Re-Creator.” He teaches us to remember by asking us not to forget the seventh-day Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11). The result of remembering the Sabbath will be a peace and happiness that we can know in no other way.





*Jesus came that we may have abundant life  
(see John 10:10).*



## Native New Day

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