

# **50 Reasons Why a Christian Should Live the Christian Life**

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Does the title of this study sound strange to you? I was holding a conversation with a Christian man at a department store one day. As the man talked I could sense that he was struggling in his Christian life. At one point of the conversation he seemed to sigh and suggest that he was trying his hardest to live the Christian life. It almost seemed that living the Christian life was a bother and hardship to him and something that he must endure or put up with. At this point I tried to explain to the man why a Christian should seek to live right. I also shared some Biblical motivating factors with him that should encourage all Christians to live right.

Over the years I have noticed that Christians can lose focus regarding what the Christian life is all about. Sometimes Christians lose sight of *why* they are a Christian and *what* motivates them to be a Christian and live for God. Beware lest your Christian life becomes a stagnant routine instead of a relationship with God. Beware lest you just exist instead of really live and enjoy the Christian life. Beware lest you lose the wonder of it all! In this study we want to share some brief reasons why a Christian should live the Christian life. These reasons should provide us with all the motivation, purpose, and assistance we need to live the Christian life. Let's really get living the Christian life!

I have a wood sign out in my garage that reads, "It's a wonderful life." You know, it really is a wonderful life when you know the Lord above and are experiencing God's life, truth, and transformation. As you travel along in your heart there's a song, it's a wonderful, wonderful, life. So let's examine the 50 reasons why a Christian should live the Christian life.

## **#1**

### **Because of Our Love for God**

Jesus said in Mark 12:30:

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all (everything you have or possess) thy heart (inner life – control center of one's being and

computer chip of your existence – love God inwardly), and with all thy soul (conscious life - soul as referring to a person's human existence – love God outwardly), and with all thy mind (thought life), and with all thy strength (serving life): this is the first commandment.”

Love for God should be the primary motivation that keeps us living the Christian life. Christians should live the Christian life because they are deeply in love with God. Let's cut through all the rhetoric and red tape. When we don't *live* the Christian life it's because we don't *love* God as we should. Life is loving God and let us remember that love for God is manifested on the inside as well as the outside. Don't think that living the Christian life is just on the outside. It's also on the inside in your heart and mind (Matt. 23:27). If you love God inwardly in your heart and mind you will love Him outwardly in your daily living and routine. One thing is certain. If you don't love God, then life becomes like a green swamp of stinky water. Life loses its true meaning for the true meaning of existence it to love God in the way that He says we are to love Him. When we truly love God on the inside, we will express our love for God, by living right and doing right (John 14:15, 23-24). Let's face it. *When we are openly and knowingly defiant and disobedient to God it's because we do not love Him.* Love for God should be the underlying motivating factor that keeps us living right and doing right in life. Love for God is the key motivation that keeps the Christian from living for self and the world (“We love him, because he first loved us” - 1 John 4:19).

You should be able to love someone if they are willing to die for you? Jesus died for you in order to save you from everlasting hell and damnation? This is why we should love Him in return. Love is what the Christian life is all about. When I truly love God and His Son Jesus Christ I will want to do right, be right, and stay right.

“I will serve Thee because I love Thee,  
You have given life to me.  
I was nothing until You found me,  
You have given life to me.”

2 Corinthians 5:14 says:

“For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

Not only should our love for God compel us to live the Christian life but Christ’s love for us. Christ’s love, which had saved Paul, now compelled him to live for Him and serve Him (1 John 3:16). No one who studies the life of the apostle can fail to wonder what made him serve so tirelessly and unselfishly. Here, in one of the greatest sections of all his letters, he gives the answer - the love of Jesus Christ. Here the love of Christ refers to Christ’s sacrificial love for Paul in that He was willing to die the sinner’s death (“one died for all”). The only reason that we love at all is because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). It is His love that compels us or moves us along. We have all been moved along in a crowd of Christmas shoppers. As Paul contemplated the marvelous love which Christ had shown to him, he could not help but be moved along in service for his wonderful Lord. When we contemplate how much Christ loved us in order to die for our sins and pay sin’s penalty, we should love Him back with willing and sacrificial service. We are indebted to God’s love.

“Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my life, my soul, my all.”

Romans 5:5-6

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

The Holy Spirit impresses upon our hearts the true nature and character of Christ’s love on our behalf. God’s love is “shed” (poured out, spilling over) in our hearts by the work of the Holy Spirit.

“Amazing love,  
How can it be!  
That Thou, my God  
Shouldst die for me.”

## #2 Because of the Grace of God

Titus 2:11-12

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation (saving grace) hath appeared to all men, Teaching (training or disciplining) us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (sanctifying grace).”

Christians should live the Christian life because they are motivated and changed by God’s grace. The grace that saves us also sanctifies us so that we can live the Christian life. People don’t believe in eternal security because they think that this will give people a license to sin. It will provide them with an excuse to go out and live like the devil the rest of their lives if they don’t have the threatening of the law and God’s judgment hanging over their heads. This is certainly not the case. Grace teaches us to live a holy or sanctified life from sin. The gracious provision of our salvation teaches us that God hates sin and that we should hate sin as well. God’s grace should motivate us to live differently.

God’s grace becomes a teaching tool that disciplines our lives to live godly and soberly in this present world. If you go to the school of grace and see Jesus dying on the cross for your sins and suffering the wrath of God in your place, it’s then that you will see just how much God hates sin and seek to turn away from sin and wrongdoing your own life. Grace teaches us to live in the shadow of the cross!! It teaches us that God hates sin and so should we! *A proper view of grace will bring forth a proper life of conduct.* Those who meditate on Christ’s death can no longer “live unto themselves” but must instead live ‘unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor. 5:15).

“Living for Jesus Who died in my place,  
Bearing on Calvary my sin and disgrace;  
Such love constrains me to answer His call,  
Follow His leading and give Him my all.”

It is grace that will also motivate us and move us out for God. It’s not pragmatism that will change us. It’s not the programs of man that will change us. It’s not the personal gimmicks that are in the church

today. It's the grace of God that will transform our lives – the pure grace of God working in our hearts and lives. Grace teaches us to live in the shadow of the cross!! It teaches us that God hates sin and so should we!

“I saw One hanging on a tree,  
In agony and blood;  
He fixed His languid eyes on me,  
As near His cross I stood.  
Oh, can it be, upon a tree  
The Saviour died for me?  
My soul is thrilled,  
My heart is filled,  
To think He died for me!

### **#3**

#### **Because of the Mercies of God**

Romans 12:1-2

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God (in view of the mercies of God), that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Christians should live the Christian because of the mercies of God. Paul is actually saying this. In view of the mercies of God we should present or yield our body to Him for His holy purposes. We should use our bodies to serve and obey God (Rom. 6:13). In short, we should do what God wants us to do and live the Christian life of consecration, dedication, separation, and sanctification. The mercies of God should stir our hearts and motivate us to live the Christian life. The word “mercies” speak of God’s compassion and pity that was expressed toward us as sinners who were once doomed to hell and without any hope. The mercies are set forth in chapter’s 1-11 of the book of Romans. They cover everything from our salvation or deliverance from hell (Rom. 1:16) to God’s imputed righteousness (Rom. 3:21; 4:5). They include our righteous and justified standing in

God's presence (Rom. 8:33-35) and God's never-failing love and never-ending security that He gives to every believer who is found in the person and merits of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:35, 38-39). What great mercies! The mercies of God should be the theme of our heart, life, and song. *God has showered pity and compassion upon us in saving us and securing us forever in Christ.* In view of these mercies ("by the mercies of God" – Rom. 21:1) we should seek to surrender our bodies to God. It's a surrender that involves sacrificial and holy living. When we allow the mercies of God to grip our soul we will find ourselves yielding our bodies to God and practicing what He wants for our lives. We will find ourselves sacrificing our time, talents, treasure and living a holy or separated life instead of a carnal life.

Paul says something interesting at the end of Romans 12:1. When we reflect upon the mercies of God that have been showered upon our lives we should live for Him without any questions. Our sacrificial and holy living is said to be our "reasonable service." The word reason speaks of something that is rational and the word "service" was a word that was used for the sacred services and acts of worship performed by the Old Testament priests. The word can be understood in the sense of worship. In other words, Paul is saying that it only makes sense to serve and live for the Lord in view of what He has done for us. Furthermore, all of our service can also be looked upon as an act of worship rendered up to God (Rom. 15:16). Living for Jesus is an act of worship that is spawned from the mercies of God. Dear friend, if the Son of God has died for me, then the least I can do is live for Him.

C. T. Studd once said:

"If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him."

Isaac Watts said the same thing in his beloved hymn: "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my heart, my life, my all."

#### **#4**

### **Because of Our Reasonable Response to God**

Christians should live the Christian life out of a natural loving response to God. This flows out of the previous point.



Romans 12:1 again states:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

If someone saved you from a burning house you would certainly, out of gratefulness and appreciation, acknowledge Him, and be forever grateful to him. You would be willing to represent him and serve him in any way you could. This would be your reasonable or rational response or service to him. In a similar way, since God has showered his “mercies” upon you by withholding hell and judgment from you (Rom. 5:9) and granting you eternal security (Rom. 8:38-39), it’s only reasonable and rational that you live for Him, serve Him, and fully dedicate yourself to Him. This is your reasonable (logikos – “logical” and “rational”) response of service or worship to God. In other words, it makes sense to serve and worship the Lord faithfully because of what He has done for us. To fail to serve Him faithfully and commit your whole life to Him doesn’t make any sense. It’s irrational, bizarre, and actually absurd to not serve the Lord through committing yourself to a life of holiness and dedication. Christians who don’t live for Jesus Christ and sell out to Him are not living rationally. They are not operating on all their spiritual cylinders. Committed holy service and living for God is a rational or sane response (and the only true response) to the mercies and love of God.

“After all He’s done for me  
After all He’s done for me  
How can I do less then give Him by best  
And live for Him completely  
After all He’s done for me.”

## **#5**

### **Because of the Redemption of God**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Christians should live the Christian for the simple reason that Jesus Christ has died to redeem them or set them free from sin's power, penalty, and the personal strongholds of Satan. The Bible says that we are not our own (vs. 19). We are no longer to be in charge of our lives. If you are still trying to take charge of your life as a Christian, then you should be ashamed of yourself. The reason that we are no longer in charge of our lives is stated in verse 20 – “For ye are bought with a price.” The imagery behind the word “bought” (agorazo) speaks of redemption. Jesus came into the market of sin and paid the market price or purchasing price to set us free from sin's condemnation and slavery. A purchasing price was needed to redeem man from sin, Satan, and the severe judgment of God. The purchasing price for our redemption was the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19 – “redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ”). God has redemption rights on us! We are bought with a price! We are not our own! We have no rights! Because of this we must glorify God in our bodies and spirits. This is the message of 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. God owns us lock, stock, and barrel.

Redemption demands that we live the Christian life. We have been bought with a price and God should now have His personal way in our lives and be glorified in all that we do (1 Cor. 6:20). God has redeemed us (set us free) so we can now live for Him in a holy fashion. God has redeemed us from Egypt, or out of this world, so we can now live free from all that is sinful and wrong (Deut. 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22). We don't want to go back to the flesh pots of Egypt and eat the leeks and the garlic (Ex. 16:3). Redemption has provided the way of freedom from the world system and all that is against God. But redemption also provides the *stimulus* and motivation to live separate. This is because the purchasing price for our redemption was costly (1 Pet. 1:19 – “the precious blood”). John Philips said: We have been bought at too high of price for us to go on the same way.” Christ has redeemed us or set us free from the power of sin.

I'm free from the fear of tomorrow  
I'm free from the sin of the past  
For I've traded all my shackles  
For a glorious song.  
I'm free, praise the Lord, free at last.



## #6 Because of the Ownership of God

Titus 2:14

“Who gave himself for us (grace), that he might redeem us from all iniquity (liberty), and purify (holiness) unto himself a peculiar people (ownership), zealous of good works (service).”

Christians should live the Christian life because God owns them. This connects with our last point. We are God’s property by redemption and are now said to be a “peculiar people” (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9 – “what is one’s own, belonging to one’s possession”). Although some Christians understand this to mean that a Christian should not wear jewelry and drive a red car we know that God is not against the color of red. The word “peculiar” has the sense of belonging – not being odd or weird. It’s true that a Christian may appear odd to the unsaved world when they live for Jesus Christ but this is not the real intent of the word “peculiar.” The older meaning of the word peculiar can refer to ownership. Webster says that peculiar can mean “belonging characteristically or exclusively to some person, group, or thing.” Therefore, this verse can be understood to mean that Christians are a people for God’s own possession (ownership) since we have been redeemed or set free “from all iniquity.”

Since sin no longer owns us God can now own us. We can now belong to God and be used for His service. The point of the verse is this. Since we have been set free from the power of sin we can now allow God to possess and control our lives. We can now be used of God. It’s also true that when God possesses us, or has control of our lives, we will live differently than the unsaved world around us. We will live the separated and sanctified Christian life before others and they will know that we belong to God and that there is Someone else in charge of our lives. This is because God owns us and out of gratitude we should give ourselves to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:19

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

The simple fact is this. We should live the Christian life because God owns us (“ye are not your own” – 1 Cor. 6:19). *Since our body is God’s personal dwelling place or house, it only makes common sense that God is to have complete control over His possession or temple. When we are controlled by something else our bodies cannot be holy or separated (“set apart”) unto God as His own personal temple where He alone resides and has preeminence or control.* This is why we are not to be brought under the authority of anything else (1 Cor. 6:12). This is why we are to yield our bodies to God (Rom. 6:11-14; 12:1-2).

“O Jesus, Lord and Savior, I give myself to Thee,  
For Thou, in Thy atonement, didst give Thyself for me.  
I own no other Master, my heart shall be Thy throne.  
My life I give, henceforth to live, O Christ, for Thee alone.”

## **#7**

### **Because of Our Slavery to God**

1 Corinthians 7:22

“For he that is called (to salvation and service) in the Lord, being a servant (physical slave of Roman Empire), is the Lord's freeman (free spiritual slave): likewise also he that is called (to salvation and service), being free (not a slave of the Roman Empire), is Christ's servant (spiritual slave).”

Christians should live the Christian life because they are now God’s free slaves. This sounds like a paradox but Paul is saying that no matter what a Christian’s physical status might be they are still a slave of Jesus Christ. They are indebted to Him for rescuing them from sin’s judgment, sin’s power, and Satan’s clutches. We are a free slave of Christ! Think of it this way. Christ rescues us and sets us free from the power and penalty of sin. Because of such a great demonstration of love we turn around as a free man (liberated from sin and Satan) and willingly become Christ’s slave the rest of his life. We are a free slave! Are you free in your Christian life? Have you allowed Jesus Christ to liberate your life from the devil’s power and sin’s sway? Does your old slave relationship to sin and the devil still have you or does your new Master control you?

Romans 14:7-8

“For none of us liveth to himself (we are to live for others), and no man dieth to himself (at death our lives will have affected others). For (the reason we don’t live for ourselves) whether we live, we live unto the Lord (we are accountable to Him, His service, and upholding His testimony); and whether we die, we die unto the Lord (we are accountable to Him, His service, and upholding His testimony): whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (His slave).

We are the Lords! This speaks of slavery. We are His to serve and please. The lordship of Christ enters into every aspect and phase of a believer’s life. Jesus is to be the master and controller of your life. Is Jesus Lord of your life? He is to be Lord of all! He wants to be Lord over that one habit and sin that you are still playing with. He wants to be Lord over that area in your life that you are not willing to yield. Dear friend, Christians should not live for their own selfish ambitions, sins, and personal goals in life but for the Lord. Christian’s don’t even die to themselves for they are ready and willing to serve the Lord beyond the grave (Rev. 22:3 – “his servants shall serve him”). This is the summary of the Christian life. No matter whether we live or die we belong to the Lord. We are to be under His authority and ready to serve Him and do His will. We are to be under His control and mastery. In short, we are to be His slave.

As God's New Testament slaves we serve and live for God out of gratitude, willingness, and surrender (Rom. 6:10-13; 22; 12:1; 14:8; Eph. 5:22; 2 Cor. 8:5, 21). This is what a slave would do for his master. We are to be His *loving free slaves* totally devoted to Christ and His cause. The analogy given in Scripture is that we are God’s free slaves who are committed to serving our new Master instead of sin. Give Jesus every room of your heart and life. He is Lord. Now make Him your Lord. All of our Christian living should be directed toward God. It should always be viewed as the loving sacrifice of a liberated slave toward his new Master (1 Cor. 7:22-23). Colossians 3:23-24 states: "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily (out of soul), as to the Lord (directed toward Him), and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

As unto the Lord! What a difference this makes! We have already seen in Titus 2:14 and 1 Peter 2:9 God's people are called "peculiar" or more literally "unto" (Greek preposition – "eis") people meaning that they are a special people separated **unto** God. Our lives are to be totally dedicated to Him in every way. The Greek word speaks of the unique, private, personal ownership of the saints by God out of which a new way of living should flow (Deut. 14:2; 26:18 – "holy people unto the LORD" and "a peculiar people"). *Too often we are a peculiar people, but not in the way God intended!* The Lord didn't die to make us odd or strange people but a people who possess a different and dynamic relationship with Him which should cause us to live differently. In short, we are to be separated unto God! *All true separation and Christian living stems from this dynamic living relationship with God.* Out of our slave relationship with God should flow gratitude and loving commitment to Him. In short, I should want to live the Christian life since I am God's slave and have been given the privilege to serve Him instead of sin.

Because we are said to be "unto God" (God's special possession – Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9) we should practice living the Christian life "unto" or "toward" God as His new slave (Ex. 28:3-4; Acts 13:2). We should gladly surrender to the Lord and live a Christian life that is holy and honoring to Him. Here is a question we need to constantly ask ourselves: "Why am I ministering? Why am I living the Christian life? If you are ministering for any other reason than to serve the Lord, then nothing else will make you happy!

## **#8**

### **Because of the Indwelling of God**

Christians should live the Christian life because God indwells their bodies. This provides great incentive to live for God. 2 Cor. 6:16, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? (separation) for ye (your bodies) are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (fellowship). When we seek to live holy lives we can fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7). When we fail to live holy we break our fellowship with God. Because God dwells in the believer and his body is the dwelling place of God (God's sacred temple) the believer should have no desire to compromise with sin in

any fashion (“what agreement hath the temple of God with idols”). This is because he will know that sin (idols) will offend God’s holy presence in His body and keep God from having His rightful place in his life. *God’s presence within our bodies calls for holiness or separation on our part.* This is because God cannot agree with sin. God never agrees with sin! Not any kind of sin. Therefore, since God dwells within our body we should not agree with sin in any measure or fashion. The New Testament teaches that our body and life is a sacred temple, sanctuary, or shrine where God dwells through the person of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19; 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21-22).

God’s indwelling presence in our body (His holy temple) should result in three things. First, we should glorify God with our body. The first key word associated without our body is the word *glorify*. God’s indwelling presence in our bodies should result in using them to glorify God. To glorify God means that we should honor God and specifically His holy presence. This means we should properly represent His holiness in all that we do and say with our body (1 Cor. 6:20 – “glorify God in your body” and 1 Cor. 10:31 - “do all to the glory of God”). Glorifying or honoring God means that we represent who God is in His character of holiness, purity, righteousness, love, faithfulness, mercy, and patience.

When we live in such a way as this we honor or glorify God for we properly represent His character. *In short, glorifying God means that we live like God.* We should live like God with our bodies. We can’t glorify or honor God with our bodies when we want to use them for unholy purposes, or when we want to use them to express unkindness toward others. We can’t glorify God with our bodies when we are unloving, unkind, or unrighteous. When we seek to gossip about others or commit any sinful acts we cannot possibly glorify God with our bodies. In other words, we can’t honor God’s love and purity.

We can’t glorify God with our body when we wrongly participate or associate with wicked and worldly vices (Eph. 5:3-4, 10-11; 1 Thess. 5:22). How can we possibly glorify God with our actions when we allow them to engage in sinful activities that do not honor God? We must constantly seek to live in such a way that we glorify God with our bodies. Don’t take God’s glory lightly. Many times we do things



forgetting about God's glory and our testimony as a Christian which is to honor God in all that we do and say (Col 3:23). We should always ask, "Can I really do what I'm about to do and glorify God? Can I really say what I'm about to say and glorify God? Can I really take this job and glorify God? Can I really engage in this activity and glorify God? Can I really gossip and repeatedly skip attending Church and honor or glorify God?" When we ask ourselves one question, "Can we do this to the glory of God," it would rule out many activities that the modern-day church accepts such as dancing, social drinking, attending the movie theater which is a place that openly endorsed and promotes some of the most wicked sins of our society. It would rule out listening to Contemporary Christian Music which incorporates a similar sound into Christian music that Satan uses for sex, drugs, and rebellion. It would rule out TV shows that promote vice, vulgarity, and vicious sinful activities.

It would also rule out playing the traditional deck of cards and celebrating Halloween which to this day continue to represent Satan and His evil workings. God's indwelling presence in our lives would also rule out compromise with ecumenicalism and religious error (2 Cor. 6:16) and the promotion of false teaching (1 Cor. 10:20). God dwells within our body! This is a powerful incentive to live for God! How can we glorify God's indwelling presence when we promote those things which Satan is behind and which clearly misrepresent God's character of righteousness and holiness? How can we glorify God when we represent darkness and evil? Since God indwells our bodies we should seek to glorify God in all that we do and say. We should seek to glorify God in all that we watch on TV and wherever we go. Let us not take God's glory and honor so lightly these days. Does it glorify God?

Second, since God dwells within our body, it should be specifically be used for His holy purposes. The key word is *sanctification* (1 Thess. 4:4). God's indwelling presence in our body should result in sanctification. Sanctification should be another result of God indwelling our body. The word "sanctification" (hagiasmos) means to be set apart unto God. Since God lives within us we should live a life that is holy, set-apart for God's holy purposes (1 Thess. 4:7), and in harmony with His indwelling life and personal presence (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Since God is holy and indwells our bodies, this means we should



not engage in those practices which would *misrepresent* His holy character. Since our body is God's personal dwelling place or house, it only makes common sense that God's holiness should never be misrepresented by our bodies. We must remember that God's holiness (purity) is not honored when we practice or participate with unwholesome activities or when we engage in those practices which are questionable (Rom. 14:23) and unbecoming to Christ and the Gospel (Phil. 1:27). Does our manner of living match the truth that we are Christians who have been saved and liberated by the Gospel of grace (Titus 2:12)? In other words, we should seek to live a holy and sanctified life by what we say, how we act, where we go, what we view, and what we listen to. Our bodies are to be totally used for God and set-apart for His holy purposes. This is true sanctification.

Third, since God dwells within our body, it should be completely controlled by God. The next key word is *ownership* (1 Cor. 6:19 – “ye are not your own”). God's indwelling presence in our body should result in God's ownership of our bodies. Instead of allowing other things to control and take ownership over our bodies we should now allow God to control our bodies. Since our body is God's personal dwelling place or house, He should have complete control over His possession or temple. When other things begin to take control of our bodies (1 Cor. 6:12) then God loses His control and mastery over our body. Jesus Christ is to be Lord of our lives (John 6:46).

When anything else begins to take control over our bodies then God is no longer in control of His temple. The issue of control is an important issue today since money, fame, sex, lust, hobbies, rock music, TV, sports, gluttony, alcohol, nicotine, drugs, and even work can take control of our lives and run our lives instead of God. When these types of things control our body God is no longer set apart and given His rightful place of ownership. Please understand that some things may not necessarily be evil by design (sports or food) but they can still become worldly to us when they begin to control our lives (1 John 2:15-17).

In summary, a temple is a holy or sacred place where God is glorified or honored, His holiness is properly represented, and a place where God is given His rightful place of ownership. All these issues are related to God's indwelling presence within our lives. The things in

this world (Rom. 12:2) that dishonor God's holiness and character, which do not glorify God, which fail to promote sanctification in our lives, and which no longer allow God to control our lives, must be discarded. This is because they are not conducive to God's presence in our bodies. They do not glorify God, honor and promote His holiness, and allow Him to control our lives which are His temple.

1 Corinthians 6:20

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

## #9

### **Because of the Pleasure of God**

Christians should live the Christian life because they want to please God. John 8:29 says that Jesus always did "those things that please him." Why do we practice living a righteous life and why are we serving Him today? It's because we want to please the Lord ("to walk and to please God" – 1 Thess. 4:1). Colossians 1:10, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." 2 Timothy 2:4, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." The question is not, "Can I handle this?" but rather, "Am I pleasing the Lord?" The question is not, "Will it please the people" but rather, "Am I pleasing the Lord?" Galatians 1:10 asks us this question, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

J. C. Ryle admonishes:

"We must give up the idea of trying to please everyone. The thing is impossible, and the attempt is mere waste of time. We must be content to walk in Christ's steps, and let the world say what it likes. Do what we will, we shall never satisfy it, or silence its ill-natured remarks. It first found fault with John the Baptist and then with his blessed Master. And it will go on caviling and finding fault with that Master's disciples so long as one of them is left upon earth. Let your

life be filled with all that pleases Him. Nothing else is worthy of the minutes it occupies.”

“Living for Jesus, a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.”

It is time to get on with it!

## #10

### **Because of Our Gratitude Toward God**

Christians should live the Christian life because they are grateful for what God has done for them. In short, I should live for Jesus and do what is right out of appreciation for what He has done for me. I should possess a heart of gratitude. This is reason enough to live the Christian life and serve the Lord. If for no other reason, I should live for Him out of gratitude.

Romans 7:6

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.”

When we become a Christian we are now summoned to “serve in newness of the spirit” which speaks of a new way of living and service that is rendered up to God. *It points to the internal ministry of the Holy Spirit who now provides us with a new motive, a new love, and new appreciation for God.* The Spirit’s internal ministry causes us to become grateful to the Lord and serve Him out of thanksgiving or love instead of trying to serve God out of the fear and dread that comes from the law which is hanging over our heads. The Spirit also provides us with the power for service and freedom to live free from the power of sin. The secret to living the Christian life is the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The “oldness of the letter” speaks of our unsaved days when we thought we could use the law to bring salvation into our lives and make God happy with our lives. The old relationship we had with the

law was one of self-effort. It was also one of bondage or enslavement to sin since the law provided no internal power to live victoriously. It was also one of fear and dread knowing that we cannot meet the perfect demands of the law. We sensed the condemnation of the law. What a difference the Holy Spirit makes! He puts a new motive in our lives. *He sparks within us a grateful heart and then gives us the power to live victoriously and faithfully for God.* We are to serve in “the newness of the spirit.” The New Covenant ministry of the Holy Spirit comes with a sign that reads: “Batteries Included.” If I try to live by the law or any commandments without the Spirit’s enablement, I will become hopelessly defeated and full of despair. I need the Spirit’s work in my heart and life so that I might possess a right attitude, a renewed heart that is grateful, and a reassuring power for daily living.

Why don’t Christians really mean business with God? Why don’t they serve and live for Him faithfully? Why do they live sinful and unseparated lives? It’s because they are simply ungrateful! They are not living by “the newness of the spirit.”

“But drops of grief can ne’er repay  
The debt of love I owe!  
Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do.”

One example of a grateful heart can be seen in the life of the healed leper. Luke 17:14-16 records: “And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.”

Now this is a grateful heart! When we have a grateful heart nothing can stop us from serving Him and living the Christian life in an effective manner. We will jump over the barriers and keep our hearts in tune if we are really filled with gratitude. Grateful people do not abandon God, His church, and His ways for their lives. Grateful people can’t ever get over what He has done for them and out of gratitude they live for the Lord. They don’t need their pumps primed,

the approval of others, or a pat on the back. What they need is a grateful heart.

Squire Boone, younger brother of Daniel Boone, was wounded in battles with Indians eleven times. Finally he settled near Corydon, Indiana, where he built a mill. On one of the foundations he carved these words:

"My God my life hath much befriended.  
I'll praise Him till my days are ended."

## #11

### **Because of Our Satisfaction from God**

Christians should live the Christian life because of the satisfaction that it brings into their hearts and lives. We receive great satisfaction when we live for God instead of ourselves and the world system that is against God. The satisfaction of God becomes a real motivating factor for living right and experiencing the inner life of Christ. Living in the world brings dissatisfaction but living for God and experiencing His inner life brings satisfaction. Jesus made this very clear when talking to the woman at the well.

John 4:13-14

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Jesus reminds us that that when we drink from the resources of the world or the waterholes of the world system we can never find true satisfaction for living. We will always be thirsty for more and more and never find that satisfying drink that quenches our thirst or brings lasting satisfaction into our lives. The Christian is to live the Christian life by experiencing the "water" (vs. 14) that Jesus offers. This refers to His gift of eternal life with all of its satisfying qualities. We are to experience the new quality of life that Jesus offers to every believer. Eternal life ("everlasting life" – vs. 14) is not only a life of unending *duration* but a life of unending *satisfaction*. It's not only a *quantity* of life but also a *quality* of life. If we want to receive true satisfaction in

life, then we must drink from the well that will never run dry! When Christians begin to live for themselves and go their own way in life they quickly lose the satisfaction that they can have through the wonderful gift of life that has been given to them. How sad when Christians backslide and begin drinking from the world's water holes that never quenches their thirst or satisfies their souls.

Jesus said in John 10:10:

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Isn't it grand to be a Christian? It should be when you are experiencing the abundant life that Jesus promises. Why should I live the Christian life? It's because I want to experience the best kind of life possible. When I live for myself and do not walk with God I miss out on the wonderful life that Jesus has promised.

"It's a wonderful, wonderful life.  
When you know the Lord above.  
There's a joy that you never once knew  
And a peace in the darkest night.  
As you travel along  
In your heart there's a song.  
It's a wonderful, wonderful life.  
Wonderful life!

Psalm 16:11

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

What was true for David in his earthly life can also be true in our lives. We must simply turn from sin as Christians and then enjoy the blessing of living in the presence of the Lord. When we live in His presence there is true satisfaction and pleasure that will bring lasting fulfillment and blessing into our lives. We need God's providential pick-up in life. We need to maintain a right relationship with Him so that we might be encouraged to go on in life. Refreshment, encouragement and satisfaction come from God.



## #12 Because of the Blessings of God

Ephesians 1:3

“Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ.”

We should want to live the Christian life in order to receive the rich blessings of God. The Bible teaches that we have been given God’s spiritual blessings through our union with God’s Son in the heavenlies (His presence before the throne). Each Christian has been given both saving and sanctifying blessings that stem from their victorious union and position with Christ. Every spiritual blessing flows out of our union with Christ. This is speaking of the sufficiency of God’s spiritual blessings in life. We have every spiritual blessing we need for both salvation and sanctification.

God has also blessed us with physical blessings.

Matthew 6:33

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God (the requirement), and his righteousness; and all these things (the result - physical needs of our lives) shall be added unto you.”

“Come, ye thankful people, come,  
raise the song of harvest home;  
all is safely gathered in,  
ere the winter storms begin.  
God our Maker doth provide  
for our wants to be supplied;  
come to God's own temple, come,  
raise the song of harvest home.”

Philippians 4:19 gives us this wonderful promise:

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Yes, God blesses us abundantly in life by supplying all of our needs – both physical and spiritual. He is the One who supplies our souls with everything we need. He is a great, big, wonderful God!

## #13

### Because of the Omniscience of God

God sees how we are living and knows what we are thinking. This should motivate us to live the Christian life.

Psalm 139:1-5

“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known *me*. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways. For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.”

Revelation 2:2

“I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

Revelation 2:19

“I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.”

Revelation 2:23

“And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.”

Yes, God knows! He knows how much we are committed to Him and what we are doing in life. God’s knowledge of our lives and our accountability toward Him but also God’s superintendence over our lives and care for us is a motivating factor to live for Him on a daily basis.

1 Peter 5:7

“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

“The eyes of God are upon me  
They see everything I do  
The arms of God are around me

They keep me safe and secure  
And He knows where I am  
Every hour of every day  
He knows each thought I think  
He knows each word that I might say  
And although there were times  
I stepped out of His will  
I've never been out of His care."

## #14

### Because of Our Fellowship With God

Christians should live the Christian life to maintain their fellowship and communion with God. This too is another good reason to live for the Lord instead of neglecting Him and gradually allowing disobedience and sin to overtake our lives. I want to live the Christian life simply because I want to remain close to the Lord and in fellowship with Him.

1 John 1:6-7

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Restoration of fellowship begins with confession (1 John 1:9) and then walking in the light of God's holiness (John 1:6-7). So living the Christian life in a holy manner is a *prerequisite* to fellowshiping with God. When we get away from the light and right living we will get away from communing with God.

James 4:8

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

The way to true fellowship and intimacy with God is the way of spiritual cleansing and obedience ("cleanse your hands ye sinners; and purify your hearts"). Christians can't fellowship with God when they are living for themselves and the old nature. You must walk the

right path and then you will be ready to commune with God. In short, if we want to fellowship with God we must cleanse ourselves of sin and begin to live differently. This is what the context of James is speaking about. If we are going to draw near to God we need to clean ourselves up and then come to God with a new longing heart that desires intimacy and fellowship with Him. Please note that you must take the imitative to draw near to God. God has not moved! It's you that has moved.

When we separate from sin and sinners who influence us to sin God promises that "I will receive you, and be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Cor. 6:17). This speaks of fellowship – not salvation. Our salvation is not based upon what we do but our fellowship is contingent upon our separation from sin and sinners who influence us to sin. The promise is this. God can in an *experiential* way be our Father and we can *experientially* be His children because we are clean and uncontaminated from the world. If we don't live the Christian life it we can't experience joyous fellowship and communion with God.

Psalm 42:1

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

"As the deer panteth for the water  
So my soul longth after Thee  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee.

You alone are my strength, my shield  
To You alone may my spirit yield  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship Thee."

## #15

### **Because of the Blessing of God**

Christians should live the Christian so that they might receive the true blessing of God upon their lives. God's true blessing only comes

when we live for Him. I want to receive God's true and lasting spiritual blessing upon my life for seeking to live and do right. The blessing of God! What a motivation for living the Christian life!

James 1:22-25

"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

A person can be deceived about living the Christian life (vv. 22-24) or he can be a doer of what is right (vs. 25) and really live the Christian life in a manner that is pleasing to God. The person who does what God decrees will find full liberty (freedom from sin's power) and will be blessed in what he does. First, let us take note that the commands and precepts of God's Word are not burdensome (1 John 5:3; Matt. 11:29-20). They are liberating! When a person "looketh" (vs. 25) into the Word of God it is not a mere glance. The word suggests that he bends over for a close inspection of what God tells Him to do. It's this type of look that liberates a person.

Many Christians merely glance at the Bible as they read it. In other words, they do not carefully study the Bible and then apply it to their lives as they read what it tells them to do. Many sincere believers read a chapter of the Bible each day, but it is only a religious exercise, and they fail to profit from it personally. Many people simply read the Bible to read it. They read the Word *carelessly* instead of looking into it with the intent to really obey it and allow it change their lives. Many today are forgetful hearers. Jesus said in John 13:17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Second, let's remember that God does not want His children to forget what they have read in the Scriptures ("being not a forgetful hearer" – vs. 25). Rather He wants them to seek to live it out in daily practice. The Bible must get down to our shoe leather or where we live in life. It must have a transforming and liberating effect upon our lives. Third, let's take note that doing right and living right results in the true

blessing of God (“this man shall be blessed in his deed” – vs. 25). When a person does what is right they will be blessed in whatever they do for the Lord since they are living right. This is a good enough reason to live the Christian life. I want the blessing of God upon my life. I want to live for God so I can be blessed by God in the things that I do for God in this life. Not only this, God also blesses us in many ways when we seek to live for Him and follow His plan for our lives. God promises blessing when we seek to live a clean and obedient way of life.

Exodus 32:29

“For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.”

Psalms 24:4-6

“He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.”

We are only fooling ourselves if we think God is blessing our lives when we fail to apply the commands and precepts of God’s Word to our lives and obey Him. The promise is this. When I live the Christian life in an obedient fashion, I can then expect God’s blessing in all that I do for Him, and also experience His blessing in my everyday living.

“Living for Jesus, a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad hearted and free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.”

## #16

### **Because of the Creation of God**

Christians should live the Christian life since God has created them to produce good works for Him. This is the reason God has saved us and given us new life.



Ephesians 2:10

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

We might call this the *creation* purpose of God for our lives. God created us to live a Christian life that is filled with good works. God has “created us in Christ Jesus” (a work only God can do) which means He has given us new life. The word created means that God has fabricated or woven our life together and made us into something special which is called “his workmanship” (Gk. *poiema* - handiwork or masterpiece). We get our word poem from this verse. In one sense, we are God’s poem. We are His creation.

Regenerated or born again believers are a masterpiece or work of art that God has produced. Man has nothing to do with this creation since the works of man are not involved in his salvation (Eph. 2:8-9). Dear friend, it makes good sense to live the Christian life simply because God has created us into a new person that can live differently and produce good works that are godly and pleasing to the Lord. He created us so that we can live differently and effectively for Him.

Please notice that we are not created (born again) by good works but “unto good works.” There is a difference! Good works are not the *root* of our salvation but the *fruit* of our salvation. We do not work in order to be saved, but because we are saved! Our very creation or birth as believers is from God (John 3:3, 5) and since we have this newly created life we should live it out in our daily Christian lives (Phil. 2:12). We must remember that we can only produce these good works in our lives because Jesus Christ has created us or made us into a different person. He gave us new life, motives, drives, power, purpose, and something worth living for. We are a completely new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). We have been created anew and now can live for God. The new creation emphasis means that God has given to us new life and as a result we *should* and *can* live separate, holy, different, and produce good works that glorify God.

John Miles said:

“We will never really believe in separation unless we believe that God has changed us, made us a new creation, and indwells us in the person of the Holy Spirit.”

Why shouldn't we want to live for Him? Why shouldn't we want to live the Christian life? God has done something so wonderful for us that we should want to turn around and live the new creation lifestyle. This is God's purpose for our lives. We are His *handiwork* or something that God has made. We are God's product. Because of this we owe our entire spiritual and physical existence to Him.

A raw countryman brought his gun to the gunsmith for repairs. The gunsmith examined it and found it almost too far gone for repairing. He said, "Your gun is in a very worn out, ruinous, good-for-nothing condition, what sort of repairing do you want for it?" "Well," said the countryman, "I don't see as I can do with anything short of a new stock, lock, and barrel. That ought to fix it once again." "Why," said the smith, "you might just as well have a new gun altogether." "Ah!" was the reply. "I never thought of that, and it strikes that's just what I do want. A new lock, stock, and barrel. That's about equal to a new gun, and that's what I'll have." You know, in a similar way, when God saves a man, he must give the man a new lock, stock, and barrel. He must give him a brand new life. This is exactly what God does when He creates us anew. As a Christian it's now our responsibility to live out this new life. We are a fantastic creation of God! Live like it! Act like it!

"Born again, there's really been a change in me.  
Born again, just like Jesus said."

## #17

### **Because of our Growth in God**

Christians should live the Christian life so they can be sure they are growing and advancing in their Christian lives. If we are not living the Christian life, we can be sure we are not growing in our Christian lives. Growth and living the Christian life are inseparably tied together. If one dies the other dies. If we stop living as we should then we are not growing as we should. Living the Christian way of life throughout our daily routine gives us the assurance that we are growing. So growth is an important reason and motivating factor to live the Christian life.

1 Corinthians 3:1

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.”

A carnal Christian is a person who is saved but who allows the flesh to control his life to the extent that they often look and act like the unsaved (“walk as men” – vs. 3). Their behavior reflects the characteristics of the men of this world and not of those who are led by the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:18). The Corinthian believers were still greatly influenced by worldly thinking and behavior and for this reason they were still babies or infants in Christ (vs. 1). They had not matured or grown in their knowledge of the Scriptures (vs. 2) and this was reflected in their daily walk (vs. 3). Paul in essence is saying, “You people need to grow up.” You are still acting like babies! They were “yet carnal” (vs. 3) which indicates that their lives of carnality were an ongoing problem and matter of deep concern for Paul. Christians can live a carnal life when they allow the things of this world to overcome them and control them. They can live in a state of defeat and fleshly actions that do not honor God or the Christian way of life.

We should want to live the Christian life so we can be sure that we are growing and advancing in our spiritual lives and not retrogressing. Each one of us must learn the importance of continual growth so that we can effectively live the Christian life in a spiritual manner and not be overcome by the flesh. How does a person grow? First, there needs to be constant meditation and reflection on the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:2

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”

There needs to be continual reflection and application of God’s Word to our lives. Second, there also needs to also be a continual awareness of Christ’s presence in our lives to provide us with His fruit and power to live victoriously and differently.

## 2 Peter 3:18

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

Believers grow as a result of the gracious work of God in their hearts and lives. We are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8) but we also grow by grace (2 Pet. 3:18) and are sanctified by grace (Rom. 6:14). Growth and holy living (living the Christian life) is the result of a gracious work of God taking place on the inside of our lives and hearts. *God's is at work on the inside of our lives and this is called a work of grace.* Grace is when God works out of the kindness and benevolence of His own heart. Grace is God working and not man! According to Peter, God's work of grace in our lives comes through the presence of Christ (“the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” – vs. 18).

This speaks of a growing experiential knowledge of Jesus Christ in our lives (His holiness, His ways, His fruit, His power). It's an inner awareness and reliance upon Christ's person, presence, and power operating on the inside of us. Grace is the method or plan God uses to change our lives and Jesus Christ is the way the plan is implemented or carried out! God's grace (His work of kindness, favor, goodwill) given for Christian living is expressed through the inner Godlike nature and power that comes through the life of Jesus Christ being communicated to our own lives (2 Pet. 1:2-3, 8).

The secret of growth is not found in psychology or ten steps but in the person and power of Jesus Christ. In short, growth involves learning (1 Pet. 2:2) and leaning (2 Pet. 3:18). *There are no substitutes and shortcuts for Christian growth.* We learn how to live from the Word of God and then lean upon Christ to give us His nature, fruit, and power to live effectively in our Christian lives. Dear friend, we should want to live the Christian life so we can be sure that we are advancing and growing spiritually. Where there is a lack of Christian living there is a lack of growth.

## 2 Peter 1:8-9

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”

In short, I want to live the Christian life so I can be confident I'm not lacking in my spiritual growth and maturity. There is a wise saying that says: "If you don't peddle a bike you will fall off." The same is true about Christian living. If you don't practice living as you should then you will not grow and mature. Instead, you will fall by the wayside and find yourself and Christian life in a miserable state of emptiness and unhappiness.

## **#18**

### **Because of the Likeness of God**

Christians should live the Christian life so they can continually become more like Jesus Christ. Of course, the more we become like Jesus Christ the more we become like God, since Christ is God (Heb. 1:3). God's ultimate purpose for our lives as Christians is conformity to His Son (Rom. 8:29 – "conformed to his image"). Today we are slowly being conformed to this image as we seek to live as Jesus would live and act like Jesus would act.

2 Corinthians 3:18 declares:

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The Christian should be able to see Christ's reflection in his life as he continually allows the Holy Spirit to change his life into Christ-likeness. There are no shortcuts to becoming more like Jesus Christ. This can only take place progressively as we allow the Holy Spirit to control our hearts and lives. What a motivation for living the Christian life! I should want to live right simply because I want to be more like Jesus Christ.

"I have one deep supreme desire,  
That I may be like Jesus.  
To this I earnestly aspire,  
That I may be like Jesus.  
His likeness shining forth in me  
I want to be like Jesus."

## **#19**

### **Because of the Joy of God**

Christians should want to live the Christian life so they might experience God's wonderful joy in their lives. When I fail to live an effective Christian life I will lose the joy of my salvation. David experienced this.

Psalm 51:12

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit."

David did not ask God to restore his salvation but the joy of his salvation. There is a difference! When we seek to live for ourselves and move away from living the way God wants us to live, it's then that we begin to lose the joy that comes through living as God wants us to live.

Jesus said in John 15:11:

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

When we practice living out the Christian life ("These things"), as Jesus explained in John 15:1-10, then we will experience true joy in our lives. What a motivation this is to live right and do right. When we are bearing fruit and pruning our lives of sin through the application of God's Word (John 15:1-2), then we will have joy (vs. 10). When we rely upon Christ (vs. 5), allow God's word to abide in our hearts (vs. 7), continue to love the Lord (vs. 8), and keep His commandments (vs. 9) then we will experience true joy (vs. 10). Joy comes into our lives when we live as God wants us to live. When we are failing in our Christian lives we are not experiencing Christ's true joy. There is a "full" (filled up, overflowing, complete) joy that we can experience in our lives when we follow His commands. If we want to reach God's goal which is to provide us with joy, then we must follow what He wants to do and how He wants us to live. There can be no joy when we are not living for Jesus Christ and putting into practice our Christian living.



“There is joy in serving Jesus,  
As I journey on my way,  
Joy that fills the heart with praises,  
Every hour and every day.

There is joy, joy, Joy in serving Jesus,  
Joy that throbs within my heart;  
Every moment, every hour, As I draw upon His pow’r,  
There is joy, joy, Joy that never shall depart.”

## #20

### Because of the Peace of God

Christians should live the Christian life so that they might experience the true peace that God offers them. Jesus said in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” When a Christian does not live the Christian life they lose the peace of God which they can have when walking in step and fellowship with God.

Isaiah 57:21

“There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

Certainly if we are practicing wickedness and failing to live for the Lord we can’t experience His true peace in our hearts and minds. God’s peace and stillness of heart and life are one of the great benefits of practicing the Christian life. I should want to live right and be right before God in my Christian life so I might receive that which He wants to offer me – peace.

“What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace,  
Buried deep in the heart of my soul;  
So secure that no power can mine it away,  
While the years of eternity roll.”

Peace! Peace! Wonderful peace,  
Coming down from the Father above,  
Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray,  
In fathomless billows of love.”

## #21

### Because of the Contentment of God

Christians should live the Christian life so they might experience the contentment of God. This is another spiritual benefit of living the Christian life. If I fail to live as God wants me to live I will never find true contentment in life. Someone said: "All the world lives in two tents - content and discontent." Which tent are you living in these days?

1 Timothy 6:6 says:

"But godliness with contentment is great gain."

Please notice that godly living is connected to contented living. Both work together. They are spiritual twins. If I live a godly Christian life I will learn to be content in whatever state I am (Phil. 4:11) and experience great stability and security in my life. Christians who practice Christian living can certainly experience God's contentment. Contentment is when we possess an *inner satisfaction* of heart in the midst of the changing circumstances that we face in life, whether health, monetary, or job related changes.

Fanny Crosby

"O what a happy soul am I!  
Although I cannot see,  
I am resolved that in this world  
Contented I will be;  
How many blessings I enjoy  
That other people don't!  
To weep and sigh because I'm blind,  
I cannot, and I won't."

## #22

### Because of the Discipleship of God

I should live the Christian life because I want to be a follower of Jesus Christ. This is a very pointed and proper reason for wanting to live the Christian life. In the simplest form, becoming a disciple of Jesus

Christ means that we are willing to become a follower of Jesus Christ. We are willing to embrace His claims for discipleship and follow Him.

Luke 9:23

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

When Jesus said “If any man will come after me” he was referring to following Him wholeheartedly by embracing His call of discipleship.

Jesus’ call to discipleship consists of four things:

1. A personal surrender to Jesus (Luke 9:23 – “deny himself”).

This is not an advertisement for Visa or MasterCard! Nobody wants to deny themselves of anything today. This is the problem with modern-day Christianity. When a person denies themselves they surrender everything to the Lord (Rom. 12:1-2). Surrender is when we deny ourselves of self-living, self-interests, selfish goals, and selfish sins so that we can give up everything to follow Christ. There are some things you can’t do for they will keep you from following Christ. Anything that gets in the way of being a follower of Jesus Christ must be scrapped. If not, it becomes a selfish ambition that is placed before Jesus Christ.

Luke 14:26-27

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

2. A priority of love for Jesus (Luke 14:26).

In Luke 14:26 Jesus was saying that I need to love Him more than anybody else or anything else in life. I need to love Him more than my own life. Christians do not hate people in a bad ethical way but they are to possess a priority of love. Jesus first, others second, you last. Our problem today is that we don’t love the Lord, as we should – first!

### 3. A painstaking sacrifice for Jesus (“bear his cross” – Luke 14:23 or “take up his cross” – Luke 9:23)

Taking up a cross speaks of sacrifice. This is what Jesus did when He was willing to carry His cross and then die upon that cross on Calvary’s hill. The cross speaks of personal sacrifice – a sacrifice that will cost you something in life – your time, talents, treasure and even torment (agony, suffering) for the cause of Christ (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus then gave two examples of the cross-life (sacrificial life):

- a. A contractor (Luke 14:28-30) – must prepare for building (consider the cost)
- b. A conqueror (military leader – Luke 14:31-32) – must prepare for battle (consider the consequences)

The point of the illustrations is this. We must count the cost if we are really going to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Following Christ does cost us something. Are we willing to sacrificially “forsake all” (Luke 14:33) that keeps us from following Christ? Are we ready to follow Christ knowing that it will mean full obedience and the commitment of our lives to His cause, persecution for our identification with Him, and giving up our own personal goals in life that do not line up with His plan? Are you ready to count the cost and say, “I am willing Lord.”

### 4. A positive submission before Christ (Luke 9:23 - “and follow me”).

Christ words “and follow me” points to the submission or obedience that is involved in discipleship. This is the third life-changing truth that is associated with real discipleship. When a person is a true disciple or follower of Christ they will submit to His commands and follow Him.

Jesus said, “Follow me” (Matthew 4:19). As Jesus called His disciples, He told each one of them to follow Him. “Follow me” (John 1:43; Matt. 9:9). Any questions? What part of this don’t we understand? His words still come ringing across the pages of the Bible and make their way into our hearts today. Christ is calling us to follow Him in the place where He positioned us in society. This means we should obey the Lord completely and wholeheartedly. Let’s

set the record straight and not mix words. Following Christ is obeying Christ!

This is what it means to follow Christ. It involves a personal surrender to Jesus, a priority of love for Jesus, a painstaking sacrifice with Jesus, and a positive submission before Christ. Some Christians need to reread the original contract that Jesus gave. If we don't want to live the Christian life, we are only telling ourselves and everyone else that we don't really want to be a follower of Christ. Let us never forget that Jesus wants to bankrupt our lives. He wants everything and deserves everything. So we should want to live the Christian because we want to be a faithful follower of Christ.

“The Master is come, and calleth for thee.”  
(John 11:28)

Do you hear His call today? If so, respond and follow the Master and don't look back.

“Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus!  
Anywhere, everywhere,  
I will follow on!  
“Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus!  
Everywhere He leads me I will follow on!”

### **#23 Because of My Priestly Sacrifice Unto God**

I should live the Christian life because I want to fulfill both my obligation and privilege to be a New Testament priest. The Bible teaches that the Church is a New Testament priesthood of believers (Rev. 1:6; 1 Pet. 2:9) who are to offer up to God their acts of service and worship. This is a great privilege. *The main function of a priest is to do the work of God and function as a worshipper of God since he has the privileged of access before God.* This is how the Old Testament priest functioned. As a New Testament priest we have access to God (Heb. 4:16) and are to live and conduct ourselves like we are living in the presence of God.

As believers we are to render up priestly sacrifices unto God, separation being part of this New Testament priestly sacrifice, and live the Christian life (bringing forth fruit, dedication and service to God, Christian virtues and character). No wonder we should live the Christian life! We should live for the Lord offering up our entire Christian life as an act of worship unto God. Everything we do in our lives is to be an act of service and worship rendered up to God. Our New Testament priesthood provides both incentive and obligation to God.

In short, the Bible teaches that every believer is a New Testament priest who should honor God with their Christian living and worship. Our priesthood is called “a holy priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:5) which means we should seek to set ourselves apart unto God and live a life of holiness and purity in all that we do. Our priesthood is linked with purity. Let us never forget this. This means we are to bring before God holy acts of Christian living, service, and worship. Our priesthood is also linked to rendering up to God “spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. 2:5) which are areas of our lives that we sacrifice for the Lord – our time, talent, treasure. They are spiritual actions of service because they come from the human spirit where God’s new life and nature functions (John 3:6) and because they are generated by the Holy Spirit who lives within our lives (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:25). In other words, the Holy Spirit leads us in holy living and sacrificial living that counts for God. He directs our lives in such a way that we want to live lives that are honoring to God and before God as New Testament priests.

Praise to God, thanksgiving, and doing good to others are also seen to be specific sacrifices that we render up to God as acts of service and worship (see Heb. 13:15). In fact, all of our service for the Lord is to really be an act of worship that is rendered up to God. Everything we do for the Lord should be a worshipful experience to Him. *Our whole concept of living can be transformed and changed, when we realize that living the Christian life is to be an act of worship rendered unto God, and lived out in His presence, as a New Testament priest.* I am a priest rendering up to God the privilege of service and worship. I am a priest seeking to honor the Lord with my manner of living, actions of service, holiness, and separation (Rom. 12:2).



Let's reiterate something. All of our holy living, dedication to God, acts of service, Christian living, and our worship is to be similar to a priestly function. We are told to live the Christian life and "do good" (Heb. 13:15) because we are priests rendering up to God and before God our acts of service and worship. All of our acts of service and godly separation are actually gifts of sacrifice offered up to God. They become a sweet smelling aroma unto Him (Ex. 30:7-8). This is the positive aspect of living the Christian life.

I am a priest offering to God my whole life as an act of worship to Him! The teaching of New Testament priesthood is a lovely and positive teaching that indicates what the desire and attitude of every Christian should be. *Whatever we do in the Christian life should become a priestly service of worship rendered up to God.* What a difference this makes in all of our Christian living, separation, decisions, and actions! This brings new meaning to all that we do in our Christian experience and why we do it. We want our Christian life to be a sweet-smelling savor unto God. Let us live the Christian life to fulfill both our obligation and privilege as a New Testament priest. Our New Testament priesthood is clearly expressed in the words of the following hymn.

“Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love;  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice, and let me sing  
Always, only, for my King;  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold:  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my intellect, and use  
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine:  
It shall be no longer mine;  
Take my heart it is Thine own:  
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its treasure store;  
Take myself and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee!"

Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:18 speaks about "holy people unto the LORD" and "a peculiar people." The children of Israel were to express their priesthood before God (Ex. 19:6) by lovingly serving and living for God. The same is true for us today. In short, since we are New Testament priests, we should want to live the Christian life sending up our service and living before God as a special act of worship. Let us never forget something. *If one is first separated unto God, he will be separated from the world.* If one is living the Christian life unto God, out of gratitude and respect for what He has done for him, then he will not sense that living right and doing right is a heavy burden (Matt. 11:30; 1 John 5:3). He will gladly surrender to the Lord and live a Christian life that is holy and honoring to Him. Exodus 28:1 says, "And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office..." (See also Ex. 28:3, 4, 41). Acts 13:2 says, "As they ministered to the Lord..." Let us never forget this!

## #24

### Because of the Chastening of God

I should want to live the Christian life because of the chastening of God that can occur in my life when I live in open rebellion against God.

Hebrews 12:5-8

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye

endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”

Continual open rebellion against God has always brought His chastening hand upon His people (Psalm 6:1; 38:1; Rev. 3:19). The Heavenly Father chastens and disciplines His children who walk in known defiance and rebellion. This is done out of love (“whom the Lord loveth” – Heb. 12:6). God chasten our lives in many ways. Sometimes He chastens through deep conviction while other times He sends into our lives different circumstances that are designed to get our attention and cause us to return to Him. I should want to remain actively serving the Lord and in fellowship with Him because of the chastening hand of God that can come upon my life. God's children still pay a high price for worldliness (Numb. 32:23; Ps. 106:15) and often end up grinding at "the devil's mill of remorse."

Thomas Adams once said:

“If thou wilt fly from God, the devil will lend thee both spurs and a horse.”

## **#25**

### **Because of the Fear of God**

I should want to live the Christian life because I possess a healthy fear of God. The fear of God should be the underlying and motivating factor for us to live the Christian life. A healthy or wholesome fear of God will provide us with proper incentive to live right and remain faithful to the Lord. There are several aspects related to the fear of God.

#### **A Reverent Fear of God’s Holiness**

There is a fear related to reverence and respect for God (Ps. 5:7; 33:4-9; 89:7; 96:9). The Bible seems to suggest that God’s saints should fear Him in a reverential and respectful way. My praying, meditation, and worship should always reflect reverence and respect for God’s holiness. Isaiah experienced this type of fear when he saw the absolute holiness and majesty of the King (Isa. 6:1-5). When we

develop a deep reverence and healthy respect for God's holiness it will have a changing impact upon our lives. We won't want to sin and be irreverent in God's presence. *We will want to break with sin and live for the Lord* (Isa. 6:8).

Actually, this aspect of fearing God (reverential fear) is the base from which every other type of godly fear flows. If we truly reverence God and His holiness we will want to conform our lives to His ways and honor His holiness. So a healthy reverent response to God's holiness is one aspect of fearing God that is needed today in our lives. It's a healthy fear of God that will help keep us living the Christian life and doing what is right. Our eyes must see the King! We must understand that we are standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5) and must live and walk (fellowship) in the presence of a holy God. When we live in the light of God's holiness we will practice the presence of God and live differently by molding our lifestyle to God's holiness.

When a person possesses a healthy fear of God's holiness and reverences Him, it will govern his behavior and conduct in life. When a person truly possesses a reverent and healthy fear of God's holiness they will want to live the Christian life. Deep reverence for God causes a person to sense their accountability before a holy God. It drives and motivates them to honor His holiness and follow His ways. There is a type of reverential fear that effects how we live and act (Ecc. 12:13; Josh. 24:14; Deut. 6:2, 24; 8:6; 10:12; 13:4).

Fearing God causes us to forsake sin, get right with God, and stay right with God! A person cannot have reverence for God and His holiness if he does not make himself accountable before God through obedience. *The fear of reverence is linked to accountability.* You cannot separate the two. Because God is holy and we fear Him, or express reverence and worship toward Him, we will want to also mold our conduct to His character and likeness (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16; 2 Cor. 7:1). If we truly fear God or possess a reverential fear toward God's holiness and unsurpassed purity, then we will clean house! We will practice the presence of God and change the manner of our living and pattern our lifestyle to God's standard.

When we live in the presence of God we will practice the presence of God. This is what Moses did (Heb. 11:27). Living in the presence of

God means that we know that God is holy, that He is watching us (Heb. 4:13), and that we should honor His holy ways. I should live in the presence of God. I should practice the presence of God. I must learn to live knowing that the invisible God is watching me at all times. I cannot hide from God! To sin is to sin in the presence of God. God is watching and we are accountable to Him and His holiness. We are a “God fearing” person when we know that God is holy, that God is constantly watching us, that we are accountable to Him, and that we must conform our will and living to His holy will and standard.

When one possesses a reverent fear of God they will also possess a wholesome dread of not pleasing the Lord (Eph. 4:30). This means that the Holy Spirit imparts the *wholesome fear or dread* in our hearts of displeasing God. A proper holy and reverent fear of God means that I will want to live my life in a manner that does not evoke God’s displeasure. My daily *living* before the Lord should be done out of a wholesome fear of God. I should practice right living simply because I fear God. I don’t want to hurt God and evoke His displeasure nor do I want to offend God’s holiness by my actions and conduct. God’s presence and my accountability to him should cause me to fear God in the sense that I don’t want to displease Him, evoke His displeasure or chastening, and also reverently respect and honor His holiness.

### A Fear of God’s reprisal

There is also a fear that knows of God’s reprisal (Heb. 12:6-7). The fear that was evoked in these people’s hearts was more than just a reverential type of fear. It was a healthy fear that God does not allow sin to go unchecked forever. It was the fear of God’s reprisal or judgment upon our lives for living independent of Him and straying far from His will and purpose for our lives. We should fear God’s temporal judgments upon our lives when we stray from Him and live in open and ongoing rebellion. I think it was this type of fear that led Noah to build the ark (Heb. 11:7). He knew that if the ark was not built he was going under!

Every believer should possess a healthy fear of God. He should want to reverence God and His holiness which in return causes him to recognize his own accountability toward God and also the reprisal of God upon his life. When someone is taught the true fear of God (Ps.

34:11) they will be taught a reverence for God's holiness, respect for God's ways, a recognition of God's presence, and the reprisal of God's temporal judgments. The fear of God will keep us from evil, cause us to hate all evil, and live for God (Prov. 3:7; 8:13; Rev. 15:4). The fear of God should be a key motivating factor in our lives and keep us on the right track of Christian living and commitment to God (Phil. 2:12; Heb. 12:28). We must be careful that we do not deactivate the alarm system of the fear of God in our lives!

“The eyes of God are upon me.  
He sees everything I do.  
And He knows where I am  
He knows each thought that I might think.”

## #26

### **Because of the work of God**

I should live the Christian life because I want to be part of the work of God. I should have the desire to participate with other Christians in doing God's work and being obedient to what He wants me to do. I should want to be part of something that is eternal.

1 Corinthians 3:5

“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?”

Paul and Apollos were the *means*, not the *cause*, of the Corinthians belief or faith in Christ. They were “labourers together with God” (1 Cor. 3:9) in that they witnessed to the lost and then God moved in the hearts of the lost. How wonderful it is to be part of God's work! How glorious to be part of something that is eternal and which will last forever! We can witness or share the Gospel and then God can work in the hearts of the people and give the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.



Although we “labour together with God” (vs. 9) in seeing souls saved let us never forget that it is God who makes the seed grow! It is God who works in the hearts of people, saved them, and changed their lives. Man has nothing to do with the life that springs forth in the soul of a person. God gives the increase. He is Lord of the harvest.

1 Corinthians 3:9 says:

“For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.”

The Bible reminds us that some plant and others water the seed but we both work together and we both have the same object and aim – to see souls saved. There should be no jealousy between Christians as they go out into the harvest fields and witness. As far as service is concerned, we are on the same level. In a coming day, each one of us will receive his own reward according to his own labor. This will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). Dear friend, I should want to live the Christian life so I can be part of something that is eternal, which is the salvation of souls, and our personal reward for serving the Lord. You ask my why I should live the Christian life? I'll tell you why. I want to be part of the work of God! I want to be part of something that will last forever! We are labourers together with God!

1 Corinthians 15:58

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

This verse is similar. The Christian should have the desire and aim to remain constant in doing God's work. He should be immovable or firmly persistent in relationship to serving the Lord and “abounding” (super abounding, exceeding, overflowing, excelling, excelling) in the work of the Lord knowing that in the end his “labour” will not be in vain. God will reward us for serving Him and living for Him in this life. Our work for the Lord will not go unnoticed. This brings us to our next point.

“Only one life, twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.  
Only one chance to do His will.

So give to Jesus every day,  
For it's the only life that pays,  
When you recall you have but one life!!”

## #27

### **Because of the Examination of God**

I should want to live the Christian for someday I am going to be rewarded for the way that I have served and lived. There is coming a reckoning day.

2 Corinthians 5:10

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

The Bible says that we are all going to someday stand before the Lord and see Him face to face. In this day we are going to be personally examined by Him and evaluated for the kind of living and service that we have accomplished for Him. None of us will be left out of this examination. This alone should provide incentive for us to get out of bed and serve the Lord. Let me just say this. If we could for one moment have a glimpse of what it will really be like when we stand before the Lord, we would never be the same again. We would pull up our bootstraps and get in the race (Heb. 12:1).

I'm convinced that we would all be better servants and have more zeal in our work for Him, if we could just see one glimpse of Him, and experience for a few seconds what it will be like, when we stand before Him. Now listen, we should possess the eyes of faith today and through faith know that this day is coming and that we are accountable to Him. This awesome day should be a motivating force to get me moving and ministering. My friend, time is short, eternity is long, and Jesus is coming again!

Galatians 6:7-8

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the

flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

Although there is a broader application of this principle of sowing and reaping it seems clear that Paul was dealing primarily with the question of financial support of Christian workers in the Galatian churches (vs. 6). The point is this. What you give financially is what you get for eternity (2 Cor. 9:6). Don't misunderstand what I'm saying. Giving does not get you into heaven but giving does get you reward. What you sow (numerically – 2 Cor. 9:6) and how you sow (cheerfully – 2 Cor. 9:7) both enter into the picture. So give sacrificially and cheerfully with no regrets for a great day is coming when the record will be made plain by the great banker in Heaven. The Lord will honor and reward us for what we have given and how we have given it. Both are important to God - quantity and quality. To emphasize one over the other will cause us to become unbalanced.

Someone said:

“Do your giving while your living; then you're knowing where it's going.”

Let us never forget that what we sow we reap. This is an unchanging principle that also applies to our everyday living for the Lord. What you put into the ground is what comes out of the ground. In a similar way, what you live for, who you live for, and how you live will reflect what you will have for eternity. In other words, how we live will be reflected in the way we are rewarded in eternity. The expression “life everlasting” (vs. 8) points to a *quality* of life that results from receiving reward which will have no end.

It's one thing to have everlasting life (John 3:16) but another thing to have “life everlasting” (Rom. 6:22) or a life that is connected with reward and recognition that will last forever. *The expression means that how we live today will somehow come back to us for eternity.* We will reap a quality of life that will go on forever in relationship to our personal reward and recognition. If we primarily concentrate on sowing to the flesh and live for fleshly things then our spiritual harvest of reward will be minimal but if we sow to the Spirit, by following His direction and purpose for our lives, then we will have a quality of life

that is filled with much reward and blessing which will never end (Gal. 6:8).

One writer said:

“We are building today the person we will be for eternity.”

May I ask you a personal question? What are you living for? Let me ask you something else. Is what you are living for worth dying for? If not, then scrap it and start moving out for God and get involved in His work. In light of this coming day of examination I should be active and determined to not give up. You should get up every day and say, “No reserves, no retreats, and no regrets” when it comes to serving the Lord and getting involved in His work. This is because a great day is coming, a day of final exams, when we will stand before Him and be rewarded for our service. This brings us to our next point.

## **#28**

### **Because of the Reward of God**

I should seek to live the Christian life because I want reward when Jesus returns. I’ve decided to keep this as a separate point to emphasize the importance of striving for reward in view of Christ’s return. This was a motivating force in the apostle Paul’s life. It is not selfish to strive for reward by seeking to win the battle related to purity.

1 Corinthians 9:25-27

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Paul spoke of bringing his body under subjection in view of the future reward that he will receive for living a life of purity. When Paul spoke of receiving “an incorruptible” crown he was referring to future reward for keeping his body in check and not using it for the unholy purposes of lust, drugs, and covetousness. God will reward His children for purity. This is a promise of Scripture. It’s also a motivating reason

why we should want to seek to live a pure life that is honorable to God.

#### 2 Timothy 4:7-8

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Paul lived his Christian life with a view of receiving reward at Christ's coming. The prospect of Christ's return and reward at His coming was a driving force in Paul's life. It helped to stay on the straight and narrow and not veer off the beaten path of living right and serving the Lord faithfully. Paul gives three reasons why he should receive reward when he stands before God.

First, he fought the battle (“I have fought a good fight”). *Living the Christian life is not a playground but a battleground.* We must learn to say no to world, the flesh, and the devil. Paul also said that he “fought with beasts at Ephesus” (1 Cor. 15:32) which of course means false teachers. Living the Christian is a battle with the enemy. If we want reward, we are going to have to stand up to the enemy and not back down. We are going to have to “hold fast” (Rev. 3:11) so that no person steals our crown by causing us to deviate from the truth and lapse into false teaching or wrong living. Many have fallen into the realm of false teaching or worldly worship forgetting that they are involved in a battle which calls for the Christian to counteract all error and worldly expressions that dishonor God's holiness (Eph. 5:11; Rom. 13:12). I must continue to fight the battle to the end. I can't give up if I want reward. One thing is certain. Jesus is going to return with a reward which he will give to every Christian (Rev. 22:12).

Second, Paul finished the course that God wanted him to follow (“I have finished my course” – 2 Tim. 4:8). In other words, Paul did what God wanted him to do. He did not fail to follow the Lord's will and calling for his life. If we want reward, we are going to have to stay on the path that God had ordained for our lives. We must follow the program that He wants us to follow and seek to finish well. There is a course that must be finished. We must stand strong and finish God's way. When we deviate from the intended course we will not receive

the reward we could have had if we would have remained on the course that God originally laid before us.

Third, Paul said “I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:8; Jude 1:3; 1 Tim. 4:1) or body of revealed truth (doctrinal teaching) that all Christians should believe, embrace, and practice. Paul believed what the Scriptures taught and would not deviate from what he knew they said and commanded. Paul very clearly says that he “kept the faith” which means he did not back down from what he knew the Scriptures taught. There is going to be reward in the future for staying true to the Bible and not giving in to modernism, pragmatism, and existentialism.

The “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8) is the reward which will be given to those believers who have exhibited righteousness in their service and living as they have *fought, finished, and faithfully* followed the truth. This reward will be specifically given to all those who love Christ’s appearing (“them also that love his appearing”). If a man really longs with deep affection for the coming of Christ and lives in the light of this event, then his life will be righteous, and he will be rewarded accordingly. In other words, when we have a love for Christ and longing for His return we will want to stay the course, finish well, and not deviate from God’s intended path for our lives. Pay day is coming.

Martin Luther said:

“I have two days marked on my calendar - today and that day!”

## #29

### Because of the Return of God

I should want to live the Christian knowing that Jesus could return at any moment and hold me accountable for the way that I am living.

1 John 2:28 says:

“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.”

This verse on the return of Christ provides incentive for every believer to live the Christian life and stay on the right path. If Christians would



maintain their fellowship with God (“abide in him”) they can be assured that they will enjoy meeting the Lord in the Rapture (“have confidence”). This is not the confidence related to salvation but the confidence that Jesus will be pleased with the way a Christian is living when He returns. Staying in fellowship with God will give the believer the confidence that he is living right and doing what God wants him to be doing when He returns. Instead of experiencing shame “at his coming” we can experience “confidence” knowing that we are in fellowship with God and living the Christian life. There is a very real possibility that one can experience shame before the Lord if he is not living a lifestyle of obedience. So living the Christian life is important for the simple reason that Christ could return at any moment and hold us accountable for the way we are living. If we are living for ourselves or following our own selfish plans and goals when Christ returns, then we will experience great remorse and embarrassment. This is what the Bible teaches.

1 John 3:3

“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

The hope of Christ’s imminent return and the day we will be like Him should stir us up or motivate us to live for Him today. Everyone who has this hope of seeing Christ and of being like Him purifies himself, just as He (Christ) is already pure. It has long been recognized by Christians that the hope of the imminent return of Christ has a sanctifying influence upon the life of the believer. He does not want to be doing anything that he would not want to be doing when Christ returns. We don’t want to find our hand caught in the cookie jar when Jesus returns. Until He comes we need to be:

“Loving as He loves,  
Helping as He helps,  
Giving as He gives,  
Rescuing as He rescues  
Serving as He serves.”

## #30

### Because of the Warnings of God

I should want to live the Christian life and stay in tune with God because of the warnings of Scripture. The Scripture gives various warnings to the believer that chooses to live his own life apart from God. First, the Bible says that sin can harden the heart and cause deception (“the deceitfulness of sin” - Heb. 3:13). How often have we seen true believers become hoodwinked by sin? Sinful lust and pride can deceive a person. It can dull his spiritual senses (Heb. 5:11) and cause him to not hear God’s voice any longer. This is one of the warnings of Scripture regarding the Christian life. We can become deceived or duped by sin. It can lead us down a wrong path and into an empty lifestyle.

Second Peter chapter one says that the believer who is not living for the Lord will eventually become spiritually blind to what is valuable or most important in life (“he that lacketh these things is blind”). When your Christian life lacks the spiritual qualities or traits for Christian living (2 Pet. 1:5-7) you lose spiritual vision or a sense of what is most important in life. You are no longer aware of what is central or key to the Christian life. You lack discernment of true spiritual values and live in a dark world of shadows. You cannot see or perceive what is most important in life.

There is a particular form of spiritual blindness that haunts the backsliding believer. It is spiritual nearsightedness or shortsightedness – he cannot see at a far distance (2 Pet. 1:9 - “cannot see afar off”). This means that he has lost sight concerning the future and what is most important in light of eternity! He only lives for what he can see now instead of living for what the future holds in relationship to reward, honor, and blessing (Matt. 6:19-21). What a tragedy this is!

Second, the Bible also says that the way of the transgressor is hard (Proverbs 13:15). This verse has always been in the Bible and it still means what it says. You reap what you sow (Gal. 6:8). If you sow a life of sin you are going to reap the consequences of that sin. It’s as simple as this. This is why you need to repent (Rev. 2:5) and confess your sin before God (1 John 1:9). Living a life of spiritual neglect and

sinfulness leads to a hard and difficult times that are the result of with sin's consequences (Heb. 12:17).

Third, sin will eventually catch up with us (Numb. 32:23). This principle is still true today. If the people were to disobey God's instructions, they would eventually discover that their sin would come back to haunt them in some way. Sin has a way of catching up with us and overtaking our lives. It has a way of becoming a master over our lives and causing us to wonder from God and experience sin's heartaches and hounding.

The old adage is still true:

"Sin takes you further than you want to go and keeps you longer than you want to stay."

Fourth, the Lord can chasten us as a Christian with *conviction* and *consequences* related to our sinful living. These are temporal punishments designed to get our attention (Hebrews 12:6). We have seen this in a previous point. The truth is this. All of the above points should provide us with a reality check and promote a desire to continually live for the Lord. The warnings of God are sufficient to provide us with incentive to keep living for the Lord.

### **#31**

#### **Because of the Grief of God**

We should want to live the Christian life so we do not grieve the Lord by our sin. The Bible says that God's feelings can be hurt. God is not some kind of lifeless God who does not possess feelings. God reminds us in His Word that He is grieved when we do not live for Him and walk with Him.

Ephesians 4:30

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

We sometimes forget that God can be grieved. The word "grieve" means to give heaviness, stress, and sorrow. God's heart can be broken when He sees us sinning and living a life that is contrary to His will and holy purpose. We must remember the grief or sorrow that

overtakes God when we sin and fail to live the Christian life. This alone should motivate and stir our heart to live a life that is acceptable and pleasing to Him.

### #32

#### Because of the Son of God

We should want to live the Christian life simply because we are linked to God's Son and can now live victoriously.

Galatians 2:20

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

The Bible teaches that we are already crucified with Christ (we died with Jesus Christ). When Christ died on the cross He defeated the plaguing power of sin over our lives by destroying and defeating the old person we used to be under the dominance and dictates (slavery) of sin (Rom 6:6-7). *Since we were spiritually crucified with Him it means that the power of sin has been destroyed in our lives.* We must accept this by faith. However, the Bible also teaches that we are raised with Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:5, 8). Galatians 2:20 explains it this way - "Christ liveth in me." Since we were raised with Jesus Christ it means that we now possess a living dynamic relationship with Him. It means that we are now presently linked to the living Lord Jesus Christ and His power. We have a spiritual unseen union with Jesus Christ that enables us to draw from His power and presence.

Dear friend, we no longer must live in the flesh and follow the worldly dictates of the old nature. We can live the Christian life victoriously and triumphantly. *Today we can claim our positional crucifixion with Christ (the death of the old person we once were) and our living union with His power and live victoriously.* We don't have to live in defeat and the despair that comes from sin. We should want to live the Christian life since God has so wonderfully provided the victory for us through our union with His Son.

### #33

#### **Because of the Power of God**

We should want to live the Christian life since God has provided the necessary power to live for Him. The Christian life is a life that can only be lived by God's power and provision. Since God promises to supply us with His unending power we should want to live for Him and do His will.

2 Peter 1:3

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue.”

God tells us that we can live an effective Christian life and godly walk because of His indwelling power. Through an experiential knowledge and application of Christ's life to ours (“the knowledge of him”) God grants to us everything that we need to live effectively, victoriously, and triumphantly. Once we learn the secret of Christ's presence and power all of God's power will unleashed upon our lives (Eph. 1:19). We should want to live the Christian life since God supplies us with the power to live in a way that is pleasing to Him.

### #34

#### **Because of the Promises of God**

We should want to live the Christian because of the promises of God. The multi-faceted promises of God provide us with the motivation and stimulus to keep on keeping on. God's satins down through the years have been greatly blessed, comforted, and motivated by God's precious promises.

2 Peter 1:4 goes on to say:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

Peter used the word “precious” to describe a Christian's faith (2 Peter 1:1), Christ's blood (1 Peter 1:19), Christ's person (1 Peter 2:7), and here Christ's promises (2 Pet. 1:4). The promises Peter had

previously written about related to a believer's inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-5) and the return of Christ (1 Peter 1:9, 13). However, there are many, many more. All the promises of God provide us with the incentive to stay the course. They provide us with hope, strength, vision, joy, and peace to go on living in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord. Someone has said: "Tarry at a promise and God will meet you there!" It is estimated that there are at least 30,000 promises in the Bible. John Bunyan once said, "The pathway of life is strewn so thickly with the promises of God that it is impossible to take one step without treading upon one of them." We should want to live the Christian life because of the promises that God gave to us in His Word.

### **#35**

#### **Because of the Nature of God**

2 Peter 1:4 goes on to say:

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Peter goes on to say that God has also implanted within our heart (control center) His very own nature so that we can now have new motives, godly drives, and determination to please God. The new nature provides us with the inward stimulus, impulse, or motivation to follow God and do what is right (Ezek. 36:26). The new nature is God's inward provision for victory over the old nature. We need a different outlook on life and new dynamic driving force to help us live the Christian. This is provided through the new nature. There is no reason to live contrary to God's will. We should want to live the Christian life because of the provision that God gave to us from within (Phil. 2:12-13).

### **#36**

#### **Because of the Deliverance of God**

I should want to live the Christian life because of the general deliverance that God has provided for me to live effectively for Him.



Galatians 1:4

“Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”

Christ died to rescue me! Let us never forget this glorious liberating truth. I need to be rescued from hell and hellish living. Because of Christ’s work upon the cross believers have been delivered or rescued from the present evil “world” (age) that is against God (“that he might deliver us from this present evil world”). Jesus has granted us deliverance from both the penalty and power of sin that is linked to the age in which we live. This deliverance is accomplished through His saving work on the cross. *The Gospel is an emancipating message.* It delivers believing sinners from all the values, vices, and villains that are opposed to God today just as certainly as it delivers them from eternal judgment to come. This is accomplished through Christ’s defeat of Satan upon the cross (John 12:31; 16:11). How wonderful. Christ not only delivers the believer from the penalty of sin but also from the power of sin. *Salvation is deliverance from a state of bondage.* We should want to live the Christian life because of this great provision of deliverance made available through Christ’s death on the cross.

### #37

#### **Because of the Victory of the Saints of God**

Christians should be motivated to live the Christian since they are already victors through Christ and in Christ (1 John 5:4). In many ways this is connected with the previous points. Because we have received God’s divine life and nature within our human spirit, we have already overcome the world system that is against God. In other words, we are already overcomers by virtue of the new life and nature of God that we now have residing within us. *There is a positional side to our overcoming power and victory.* We are tied to the life of Jesus Christ and are given the promise that we are already overcomers. This overcoming position in Christ is something that has happened in the past when we placed faith in Christ (1 John 5:5). Although the battle is still going on in our present lives we have already overcome through faith in Christ because we have already received His very own indwelling and victorious life. This is what John is saying. Of course, this position must be applied in our daily living. The position

must be put to use within our practical lives. What good is a position if we do not allow it to get down to where we live and move in life?

John repeatedly stresses our victory over Satan (1 John 2:14; 3:8). God has given His people victory over Satan and the world system so that we no longer must allow the Evil One and his satanic system to rule our hearts and lives. Because of this victory we can live separate from *sin*, *Satan*, and a *system* that is opposed to God's holiness and ways. We should want to live the Christian life since we are already victors in Christ. Our desire should be to apply the victory that we have in Christ to our own lives. *God went to great lengths to provide us with this victory.* It cost the death of His only begotten Son to provide us with victory. We should be appreciative of this great sacrifice and provision and live for God today.

### **#38**

#### **Because of the Spirit of God**

We should have a desire to live the Christian since we have the presence, power, and provision of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives. The Spirit's operating ministry in the lives of the saints is the "Magna Charta" for all New Testament living.

1 John 4:6

"We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

The great battle of the ages is between truth and error. The Holy Spirit gives the promise that He will lead every believer in truth, what is right, and what is holy. But the Holy Spirit also provides us with the power to live victoriously and effectively for God.

Galatians 5:25

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Ephesians 5:18

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

These verses teach that the Holy Spirit also empowers the believer to live according to God's pattern and demands for holy living (Ezek. 36:27). We are told to walk according to the Spirit's power and provision for fruitful living (Gal. 5:22-23). We are commanded to be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit's power and virtues. The Spirit directs (Gal. 5:18) us in holy living and then delivers His power to our lives (Gal. 5:25; Acts 1:8) so that we can live in a manner that is honoring to God. The obvious point is this. We should want to live a life that is pleasing to God since the Holy Spirit resides within us to provide us with both direction and power for daily living. We have been given the Holy Spirit. What better reason to live for God!

### **#39**

#### **Because of the Race of God**

We should want to live the Christian life because of the race that we are running. The Bible tells us that we are involved in a race or contest striving to receive reward at the end of the journey.

Hebrews 12:1-2

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

The Bible teaches that we are in a race. It's a race for reward from God and recognition by God throughout eternity. We can find motivation to win the race by looking at those saints who have already won in spite of hardships and great difficulties. They are mentioned as the “so great a cloud of witnesses” (Heb. 12:1) which contextually refer to the saints that are mentioned in Hebrews chapter eleven. The expression “Wherefore” links itself back to Hebrews chapter eleven. Those who have gone on before us inspire us to remain faithful and stay in the race that God has set before us. They become an inspiration to us.

We also find motivation to win the race by “Looking unto Jesus” (vs. 2). Jesus is our greatest incentive to stay on track and do the Father's

will no matter what might befall us in life. We receive inspiration when we look at Jesus and see how He followed the Father's will to the end. He endured the cross and finished in the will of God and so should we. Christ's life of devotion and determination to follow the Father's plan for His own life becomes the greatest example and inspiration to us of someone who remained in the race to the very end. We should want to live the Christian life because of the race that we are running and the eternal dividends that await at the finish line.

#### #40

### Because of the Calling of God

We should want to live the Christian life since God has called us to live a life that is different from those around us.

Ephesians 4:1

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation (calling) wherewith ye are called."

The Bible teaches that God has called us to heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:5). *This is a place of exalted union with Jesus Christ in Heaven who is the great Victor over the devil and every demon.* This is the message of the book of Ephesians. A high and victorious calling such as this should motivate us to live in a way that honors and reflects this calling. This calling should be reflected in a new walk which is briefly explained in Ephesians 4:2-3. It is a *lowly* walk, a *longsuffering* walk, a *loving* walk, and a *like-minded* walk. The point is this. The high and victorious calling of God upon our lives should provide us with both the power and motivation to live the Christian life. We have been united to the Great Victor and have no excuses to live down in the dumps and degradation of sin. We should seek to live a holy and consecrated life before God since He was gracious enough to call us and save us.

1 Peter 2:9

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

In short, since God has called us out of the realm of darkness and sin we should be willing to obey this holy calling of God upon our lives. We should be willing to live the Christian life and commit our days to the Lord Jesus Christ in every way.

#### **#41**

### **Because of the Testimony for God**

We should seek to live the Christian life since we are to maintain a testimony for God before the watching world that is all around us. Many Christians forget about their testimony or don't care about what kind of testimony they have before a world of unbelievers. Their lives do not leave the fragrance of new life and holiness behind them.

1 Timothy 4:12

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Timothy was not to allow others to despise him of his younger age by living an exemplary life or testimony before them. He was told by Paul to be a Christian “example” (tupeos - mark, imprint, model). In other words, when others look at Timothy and us they are to see an example of what it means to be a Christian. They are to see the imprint or mark of the Christian life upon us. They are to see us as a model representing the Christian life. They should see that we are Christians by how we live, what we say, and where we go in life. This verse actually tells us that we are to be an example or testimony for God “in word (what we say), in conversation (what we are), in charity (what we love), in spirit (what we desire), in faith (what we believe), in purity (what we do).”

2 Peter 3:11

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation (manner of living) and godliness.”

Many Christians do not know what they ought to be! They don't know how to be a shining testimony for Christ. They don't know how to live and represent a holy life since they were never taught and trained

about sanctification. However, other Christians are carnal and they are not willing to learn what the Bible says about holy living or “holy conversation.” Holy living refers to Christian separation and sanctification which is a life set apart from the world and toward God. The word “godliness” speaks of living a life of respect or reverence for God which ultimately reflects God’s life.

Peter’s main point is this. Since this old sin-stained and sin-scarred world will someday be blown up we ought to remember the importance of our holy testimony and those things are eternal.

Everything material has the stamp of transitory upon it. The things that men boast about, the things for which they live are passing things at best (1 John 2:17). To live for material things and personal pride and self is to live for the temporary. Common sense tells us to turn from the tinsel and toys of this world and live forth a testimony of holiness and godliness. It is a simple matter of living for eternity rather than time, of emphasizing the spiritual rather than the material, of choosing the permanent over the things that are going to pass away.

The believer is to reveal and emulate the life of God to this world through sanctified or holy living (Phil. 2:13). We are to possess a godly testimony and represent truth and God to this world through the Biblical application and practice of separation (1 John 2:15-17). As far as our testimony is concerned, we are called upon to be living “epistles” that are “known and read of all men” (2 Cor. 3:2). We are the only Bible some people will ever read! We are called upon to be a sunbeam of “light” (Matt. 5:14), savor of “salt” (Matt. 5:13) and separated “saints” (Eph. 5:3) who are called to be set apart from this world. Revelation 2:5 says that the Lord can come and “remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” Removing the lampstand speaks of losing our testimony for the Lord. When we refuse to repent of our sins the light of our testimony goes out. Let us never forget this. We should want to live the Christian life for the simple reason that we want to represent a holy and godly testimony for God and before those who are lost.



## **#42 Because of the Jealousy of God**

We should want to live the Christian life for the simple reason that God is a jealous God. He reserves the right to possess holy jealousy toward His children and followers. He wants their full allegiance and worship. The Lord God states His jealousy from the very beginning.

Exodus 20:1-5

“And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.”

In these verses we see three things. First, God releases us from our sinful conduct (vv. 1-2). Second, God reveals to us His sacred command (vv. 3-4). Third, God reasons with us about His spiritual character (vs. 5). God reasons to His children, who observe His commandments, that He is a jealous God, who wants the total allegiance of His people. He does not possess any leeway or allowance for the worship of other gods. God is a jealous God demanding total allegiance to Himself and His ways. Since God had released them from Egyptian bondage He is worthy to be worshipped and wholly followed. The same is true of our lives today who are His children. He has released us from the sinful bondage of the past and has given us a new life. Certainly God has every right to be jealous and demand that we follow Him.

An unsaved man once told me that God was selfish because He demanded that His creatures worship Him. Of course, this unsaved man wanted nothing to do with God or His Son Jesus Christ. He tried to create God into some kind of sinful being that was selfish. Many try to do this today to get themselves off the hook. I immediately told this ungodly man that God gave to Him life and every breath that he has. The God who is the creator of everyone and the sustainer of

everything in the universe can say with absolute purity and righteousness that He is a jealous God that demands total allegiance and worship. Even the unsaved have no reason to turn away from God when they realize what God has given to them.

As a Christian, we must remember that we should live the Christian life and remain faithful to God for the simple reason that He is a jealous God, who demands our total allegiance to Him, in view of how He has delivered us from the sinful bondage of our past. Our twenty first century idols (1 John 5:21) can get in the way of our allegiance and devotion to Him. God does not want the modern-day idols of worldly sins to rule our lives since He alone has rightful rule and authority over our lives. When we serve money, fame, hobbies, work, and our own personal pursuits in life these things become gods or idols to us. They steal away our allegiance, commitment, and worship of the true and living God who loves us and wants to fellowship with us.

2 Corinthians 11:2 reveals the same truth about godly jealousy: “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Paul was actually saying this. He had won these people to Christ and for this reason he possessed a godly jealousy over them. His jealousy was manifested in this way. He did not want to see the saints become corrupted with false teaching. Think of this way. A husband should possess a wholesome jealousy over his wife and rightfully resent and resist any rivalry that threatens their love for each other. A true patriot of a country has every right to be jealous over his freedom and he will fight to protect it. Likewise, a father (or a mother) is jealous over his or her children and seeks to protect them from anything that will harm them.

The picture Paul present here is that of a loving jealous father who has a daughter engaged to be married. He feels it is his privilege and duty to keep her pure, so that he can present her to her husband with joy and not with sorrow. Paul is saying that he was like a spiritual father whose Gospel message brought them into a betrothal relationship with Jesus Christ (“espoused to one husband” – see also

Rom. 7:4). Paul viewed the local church as a bride that was engaged to be married to Jesus Christ at His coming. This marriage will not take place until Jesus Christ has come for His bride (Rev. 19:1–9). Meanwhile, Paul felt that it was his responsibility to keep the people from becoming corrupted by false teaching as they prepare to meet her Beloved Bridegroom. He wanted to present the church as a “chaste” or pure “virgin to Christ” at His coming! From a spiritual perspective Paul wanted the church pure and living as they should be living when Jesus returns. He wanted the Bridegroom to meet a virgin instead of a church of vice. Therefore, Paul says he possessed a “godly jealousy” over these saints wanting them to remain true to what He taught them and wanting them to follow the truth of God’s Word. In short, we should desire to live the Christian life since God is jealous over our lives and demands our loyalty, love, and devotion to Him.

### **#43**

## **Because of the Commands of God**

We should want to live the Christian life since God commands that we live a life that is pleasing to Him and in accordance with His holy purpose. The Bible is filled with many commands. The direct and clear commands of the Bible teach us to live a Christian life that is separate and holy unto the Lord. Take the Ten Commandments alone (Exodus 20:1-17) and you will discover God’s general or overall desire for Christian living. The Ten Commandments deal with these basic things:

1. Keep your allegiance holy - (vs. 3) - No other gods
2. Keep your worship holy - (vv. 4-6) - No heathen worship
3. Keep your speech holy - No cursing (vs. 7)
4. Keep your time holy - No Sabbath breaking (vv. 8-11)
5. Keep your family holy - No dishonoring parents (vs. 12)
6. Keep your actions holy - No killing (vs. 13)
7. Keep your life holy - No adultery (vs. 14)
8. Keep your hands holy - No stealing (vs. 15)
9. Keep your tongue holy - No lying (vs. 16)
10. Keep your heart holy - No coveting (vs. 17)

Nine out of the Ten Commandment are reiterated in the New Testament because they pertain to the moral law and code of God

that never changes. The New Testament clearly reveals that we are not to judge people according to the Sabbath (Co. 2:16) since the Christian no longer lives under the law as a rule of life (Rom. 6:14). However, as a general rule every Christian must still keep their time holy and be willing to give time to the Lord and for the Lord (Eph. 5:16; Heb. 10:25). A strict Sabbath observance is not required in the New Testament but a willingness to give time for the Lord is required. The principle behind the command is clear. Give God the time He deserves! The question is this. Are we willing to follow the clear and unchanging commands of God's Word?

There are many commands given even in the New Testament for Christian living that need to be obeyed (John 14:15, 21; 15:10; Rom. 12:2, 9-14; 13:13; 1 Cor. 7:10, 19; 10:27; 14:40; 2 Cor. 6:14-17; 7:1; Gal. 6:2; 5:19-23; Eph. 4:26-30; 5:3-4; 5:22; Col. 3:21; 4:6; Phil. 4:8; 1 Thess. 4:1-3; 5:16-18, 19; 2 Thess. 2:4, 6, 12; 1 Tim. 2:9; 4:6-10; 6:11; 2 Tim. 1:8; Titus 2:4-7, 15; Heb. 10:25; James 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Peter 3:9; 2 Peter 3:1-3; 1 John 2:3, 6, 15-17; 3:22; 5:2; 5:21; 2 John 1:6, 10; Jude 3; Rev. 12:17; 14:12; 22:14). These commands should remind us that God requires His children to remain faithful to Him and serve Him instead of living for themselves. The commands of God are designed to give us instruction for holy living so that we have no excuse to live in ignorance and sin. We should seek to live the Christian life because of the clear revelation of God's commands and will which is found in the Bible.

#### **#44**

### **Because of the Holiness of God**

We should want to live the Christian life so that we can honor God's holiness. God has commanded us to live a holy life simply because this is the way God lives and acts.

Leviticus 11:44

“For I am the Lord your God (God's control): ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves (God's call), and ye shall be holy (God's command); for I am holy (God's character): neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth (God's course).”

Leviticus 11:45

For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt (God's delivery), to be your God (God's desire): ye shall therefore be holy (God's demand), for I am holy (God's distinctiveness).

In short, we should want to live the Christian life so that we might emulate God's holiness and strive to be like God in our daily living and conduct. *The holiness of God demands a Christian response from our lives.* Our desire to imitate God's holiness should motivate us to stay committed to living the Christian life and doing what is right and pleasing in His sight.

Leviticus 20:26

"And ye shall be holy unto me (command of God): for I the Lord am holy (character of God), and have severed you from other people (calling of God), that ye should be mine (control of God)."

"Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;  
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!  
God over all, and blest eternally."

1 Peter 1:14-15 is the New Testament counterpart:

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance (conduct of God's children): But as he which hath called you (calling of God's purpose) is holy (character of God's holiness), so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (command of God's Word)."

God has *called* us to be holy. God has *commanded* us to be holy. God has also shared His *character* with us to remind us why we should strive to live holy. As we share and participate in God's holiness we will learn to become holy "in all manner" of living (1 Peter 1:15). Holiness is a command to be obeyed, a course to be followed, and a commitment to be kept. *The pursuit of holiness demands separation from all that is opposed to God's holy nature and His Word.* The sooner we realize this the better we will live the Christian life. Holiness or sanctification is the will of God for our lives.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.”

The word “sanctification” (hagiasmos) means to be set apart (separated) from the sinful living of the world and set apart (consecrated) for God’s use. This word has the same meaning as holiness. It is sometimes translated by the word “holiness” in our Bibles (1 Thess. 4:7; Rom. 6:22; Heb. 12:14). Believers are to be “partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10). The idea of separation is inherent in the meaning of the word holiness. *Since God is holy He is a separatist for He only practices holy actions.* Living a separate life has its foundation or roots in the truth of God’s holiness. Separation is woven into the fabric of holiness. The Christian practice of separating from sin is the result of striving to represent God’s holiness.

Two theological students were walking along a street in the Whitechapel district of London, a section where old and used clothing is sold. "What a fitting illustration all this makes!" said one of the students as he pointed to a suit of clothes hanging on a rack by a window. A sign on it read: SLIGHTLY SOILED--GREATLY REDUCED IN PRICE. "That's it" he said. "We get soiled by gazing at a vulgar picture, reading a coarse book, or allowing ourselves a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thoughts; and so when the time comes for our character to be appraised, we are greatly reduced in value. Our purity, our strength is gone. We are just part and parcel of the general, shopworn stock of the world."

Let me reiterate something. God’s holiness demands a response from our lives. Since God is holy we should strive to live holy. There are many things that we need to undo and unlearn in our lives as we yield to God’s holiness. Holiness is linked to putting away sins (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:24-32; 1 Thess. 4:3-7; Titus 2:3). Holy Christians will live in contrast to the compromising lifestyle of the heathen or unsaved world (Eph. 4:17) and the mark of this different lifestyle is “righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:24). Christians who want to maintain a holy standard will *look* different, *sound* different, and *act* different in many ways. They will have different tastes and lead different lifestyles that are opposite of unsaved people who are dominated by sin and Satan. We express holiness when we separate



ourselves from that which is morally unlike God, yield ourselves to Him, and do His will (Rom. 12:1-2).

Christians are called upon to remember “his holiness” (Ps. 30:4; 97:12) so that it might affect their lives in a positive way by causing them to forsake sin and live the Christian life. Take time to be holy! We don’t want to profane (defile, desecrate, pollute) God’s holiness by serving the flesh and supporting anything that is not holy and like God. Malachi 2:11 says, “...for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved...” A Christian can profane God’s holiness in his own life when he allows himself to cooperate with sin and uncleanness. The holiness of God is and misrepresented.

The Bible teaches that sanctification or holiness is brought about through reading and obeying the Word of God (John 17:17 and as we rely upon the ministry the Spirit of God (Rom. 8:2-4; 2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:25).

John Phillips aptly remarked:

“When we lose sight of God’s holiness, a holiness calculated to strike awe into every heart, we lose our sense of the seriousness of sin (Isa. 6:1-5; Dan. 10:5-9).”

Now think of this. Every man is as holy as he really wants to be! You are as holy as you choose to be. God wants us to strive to live a holy life as we yield to His indwelling power.

The Bible also teaches that God hates an unholy mixture between that which is good and bad. Lev. 10:10 says, “And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean.” This same truth is repeated in other Scripture (see also Lev. 11:47; 20:25). An old Plymouth Brethren, who was a close friend of mine, used to always say, “God hates a mixture!”

Isaiah 5:20 wrote:

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”

The spiritual taste buds of those who compromise with error, who attempt to mix the good with the evil, actually begin to develop a taste and liking for fleshly or bitter things, claiming what was once bitter, now to be sweet. *Mixture and compromise always causes a mental breakdown of God's absolute standard and eventually a complete distortion of God's high and holy standards or ways.*

If one eats a piece of bitter chocolate or drinks coffee long enough, they eventually develop a taste for it. What happens over time? They gradually teach their brain that they like these things and allow their taste buds to react positively to these things. The point is this. When mixture begins to take place in God's work and the hearts of God's people the end will always be bitter! Even when the taste buds of those practicing error or worldliness, can no longer sense the bitter taste of compromise, it will still be bitter to the Bible believing practicing separatist. God will have the final say on all mixture.

Gary Cohen wrote:

"When God's work is not done in God's way, then both good and evil are produced, and only He who sees all things from His seat in heaven can see on which side the balance leans."

The obvious point is this. We should always keep our standards high. We should never seek to take the road of compromise for when we do mixture occurs. The New Testament also speaks about "uncleanness" (Eph. 5:3) and the "unclean thing." 2 Cor. 6:17) or those things which are unholy and which do not mix with that which is holy. Dirt is dirt no matter which way you look at it. Dirt can only be one thing – dirt. So if something looks like the world, sounds like the world, and like the world, it is the world!

Job 14:4 asks the enduring question:

"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one."

The obvious point is this. Unclean things do not produce spiritually clean things. If you sprinkle dirt on something it can no longer be clean. Likewise, spiritually clean things cannot come forth from spiritually unclean things. So we should want to live the Christian life in order to honor and emulate God's holy character. What a motivation this is for our lives.

## **#45**

### **Because of the Will of God**

We should have a desire to live the Christian life and remain faithful since it is the will of God for our lives. The Bible clearly reveals that living the Christian life is God's purpose and will for our lives. One cannot miss this when studying the Bible. Jesus actually sets the pattern and example for following God's will for our lives.

In John 6:38 He said:

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.”

Living the Christian life is doing the will of the Father for our lives. Therefore, we should want to follow the Father's will for our lives and please Him. We should want to please the Father by the way we conduct ourselves and live out our lives on this earth. We should want to live the Christian life in order to do the Father's will and please Him by our conduct and commitment to Him.

The Bible also teaches that we should want to live the Christian life so that we might know God's holy will and purpose for our lives. Without the desire to live for the Lord we cannot know God's will for our lives. This is incentive enough to live for the Lord. Romans 12:1-2 brings this out.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

First, there is the presentation of our Christian lives (vs. 1). This involves submitting ourselves to Christ's Lordship or mastery over our lives. It involves a decision on our part. It's a matter of our will and desire and love for the Lord. It comes from the heart.

Second, there is then the separation of our Christian lives (vs. 2a – “be no conformed”). This is the result of presenting our body to the

Lord. We will want to live differently instead of living like the world. *Until a person surrenders to the Lord they can't live different.* We often wonder why some Christians live a carnal life and don't get their act together. The reason is simply. They have not really surrendered to the Lord.

Third, there is also the transformation of our lives (vs. 2b – “transformed”). This is the product of living a separated life. Christians will live different or be transformed in their way of living after they become *separated unto the Lord* in their daily practice and living. A separated lifestyle is a transformed lifestyle.

Fourth, there is the renovation of our thinking process (vs. 2c – “renewing of the mind”). This is the instrument of our transformation. The text says this renewal comes “by the renewing of the mind” or the way that we think about sin and worldly living. This is the key that many miss. It's the key that unlocks the door to living a separate and transformed life. The Bible teaches that we must change the way we think about sin and all worldliness if we are going to change the way that we live.

In short, we must change our thinking before we can change our living. This change of thinking can only come by examining our lives and every area of conduct alongside of God's Word (John 17:17; Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:2). Until a person comes to the place where they change their mind and attitude toward sin they will not change their lifestyle in sin. They must see their sin as something that is despicable in God's sight and which offends His holiness. Only then will they turn from it and be transformed in their living.

Fifth, there is the information stage (vs. 2d – “that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”). This is the result of right thinking. *When we think right we will know how to live right!* When we pattern our actions and decisions on the basis of God's unchanging commands and principles we will not lapse into unholy living.

Once we get to the place where we actually change our thinking about sin and worldly living, through placing it under the scrutiny of God's Word (1 Thess. 5:21), then we will be able to “know” (discern)

what God's holy will is for our lives and practice it. Right thinking that is based upon God's unchanging truth results in knowing God's holy will for our lives which is termed as being something that is "good" (honorable, excellent, upright, delightful), "acceptable" (well-pleasing), and "perfect" (complete – lacking nothing in moral quality). The point is this. We can't know what God's holy will is for our lives unless we are willing to search God's Word and change our thinking regarding sin and worldliness. Once we think right we will live right! Generally speaking, dedication (vs. 1) results in discernment (vs. 2) that leads to delight ("good") in practicing God's holy will.

There is progression here. One we pass through the presentation stage of our lives and fully yield ourselves to purpose for our lives, it's then that separation and transformation can take place. But the separation or transformation will only happen through a renovation of our mind which results in the information or learning of God's will for our lives. *In short, right thinking is the key that unlocks everything.* When we study God's Word we can "know" (discern) what God expects and in return follow God's will for our lives. We should want to live the Christian life so that we might be able to discern God's holy will and do it. It should be our goal and desire to follow God's holy will for us as we present ourselves to God and find out what God's will is for our lives through His Word.

#### **#46**

### **Because of the Glory of God**

We should want to live the Christian life so that we might glorify God through our manner of living. Failing to live the Christian life does not glorify God. God's name is not honored or exalted when we sidetrack our commitment to Him in life. The glory of God speaks of God's praise, honor, and exaltation that God alone deserves. This praise to God can only be given when our worship, living, and speech line up with God's holy and righteous character. God cannot be glorified or praised when sin and rebellion enters into the picture. God cannot be praised at the same time the devil is being praised. To live in a way that glorifies God means that we conduct our lives in such a way that God's name and character are praised and honored. We will seek to do what Jesus would do and the way Jesus would do it so that He alone gets the glory.

1 Peter 4:11

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

In this context Christians were to use their gifts, whether they are speaking or serving gifts, in such a way that God may be glorified through their use. This certainly applies to all phases of our living. God wants us to live the Christian life so that God may be glorified or receive honor and recognition through the way that we live and serve Him.

1 Corinthians 10:31

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

This means we should live our life in such a way that God can be praised and honored with all of our activities. To glorify God would mean to do those things that would exalt, honor and magnify God’s attributes and character such as His holiness, righteousness, patience and love. The background to this verse is set in the context of verses 20-21 where Paul forbids the people to attend those places where pagan religious services were taking place. The people were not to attend the pagan temple restaurants where religious services were taking place. If they did attend these places they would be participating with those religious pagan services where people worshipped their false gods by offering food and drink to them. However, the people were really offering the food and drinks to demons that were behind the idol worship. God does not get the glory when we compromise with pagan or false religion.

Hence, “fellowship with devils” (demons) and the “cup of devils” (demons) would occur if a Christian attended a place where pagan religious services were occurring (1 Cor. 10:20-21). Here is a teaching often neglected and totally forgotten today – the teaching of wrong religious association. We associate with pagan or false religion which is demon inspired (1 Tim. 4:1) when we mix with liberal Protestantism which questions or rejects the major tenants of Christianity and the only way of salvation through Jesus Christ. We



should steer clear of those churches and ecumenical practices that are clearly promoting Satan's agenda and those religious practices which are damning people to hell through false religion. We should refuse to have any part in those places, services, or events that harbor the enemy.

The point is this. Doing everything to God's glory means that we are to live our lives in such a way that we honor God's personal character of holiness and righteousness, so in return God can receive praise and honor. This means we should be careful where we go, what we associate with, and how we conduct ourselves. When we attend certain places that clearly promote Satan's religious agenda we can't be glorifying God. This is why ecumenicalism does not bring glory to God.

We should want God to be honored or glorified as we seek to conform every aspect of our living and thinking to His holy and righteous character. We should want God's holy character and name to be honored and exalted by the way that we live and conduct ourselves. In short, we should have a desire to live the Christian life so that God's glory would be properly represented and so that His glory would be seen through our lives.

#### **#47**

### **Because of Our Separation Before God**

We should want to live the Christian life for the simple reason that God has called us to live a separated life that is pleasing to Him. God has saved us to sanctify and separate our lives. When we live for ourselves and our own agenda in life we are not living a separated life that is pleasing to God. God saved us and now He expects us to separate ourselves from all those things that would hinder our Christian walk. Jesus set the example of Christian separation when He was here on earth.

Hebrews 7:26

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

Jesus was separate from sinners. This does not mean He isolated Himself from sinners. Jesus was a friend of sinners (Luke 7:34). We too can be a “friend of sinners” and still be “separate from sinners.” Jesus was willing to speak with sinners of their need for salvation and He was willing to reach out to them and assist them in life. When the Bible says that Jesus was “separate from sinners” it means that *He did not participate with their sins or associate with their sinful lifestyle in any way.* The same should be true of Christians today. If they truly want to live the Christian life they should practice separating themselves from the sins of sinners and not allow the sins of others to impact their own personal lives. We must take our stand today. We should want to live the Christian life today so that we can remain separated before God instead of sinning with the sinners of this world which seek to entice us and defile our lives.

2 Corinthians 6:17

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

This verse is teaching the doctrine of Christian separation. With unmistakable terms Paul commands that we separate from the vices and values of the unsaved who live all around us. We are not to adopt their philosophies and pagan customs which run contrary to Biblical revelation. Separating from the unsaved means we do not develop close ties with the unsaved (2 Cor. 6:14 – “unequally yoked”) to the point that we fellowship with their sinful practices or participate in their activities which dishonor God’s truth, holiness, and righteousness. We are not to allow the culture to capsize our spiritual lives and destroy our spiritual effectiveness for the Lord. If we don’t separate from the sinful practices of people we will sooner or later find ourselves being swayed into their thinking and manner of living. We will find ourselves warming up to the fires of the world like Peter did only to compromise in the end (Luke 22:54-57).

Jeremiah 10:2

“Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen ...”

God’s people are instructed to never take part, associate, or endorse any heathen pagan ways. This command has not changed. God’s moral commands and laws never change. God has not relaxed His standards for purity from heathen practices and ways. This verse

should speak to our hearts today and help us to realize that we don't have to put tattoos all over our body, rings in our lips and noses, gamble, and listen to the heathen music of our day. We must learn the importance of separating from the practices and programs of heathenism today.

Nehemiah 9:2

“And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.”

Ezra 6:21

“And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat.”

This is what God wants from our Christian lives today. He wants us to live a life that is not contaminated by those who live around us. This calls for separation – personal separation (separation from anything in the world system that defiles our lives), ecclesiastical separation (separation from churches which compromise with apostasy and worldliness), and family separation (saints in the church family who commit sins worthy of church discipline). Separation is necessary in the Christian life and we should want to live the Christian life in order to remain separate from those people, places, programs, and personal sins that defile our lives. Separation is a definite choice. God's people can refuse to live a separate life and find themselves being corrupted by society and the sins of the heathen. This is what happened to God's people after their time of captivity and when they returned to the land.

Ezra 9:1

“Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.”

The people lost their separated position when they failed to separate themselves from the unregenerate people of the land (“holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands” – Neh. 9:2). Their failure to separate from the unsaved caused them to become corrupt and useless to God. The lesson is very simple. If we don’t separate, we will eventually become saturated and absorbed by the sins of a secular society (1 Cor. 15:33).

Although we don’t function as an independent or separate nation like Israel, who basically isolated themselves from the heathen around them, we do practice separation from the personal sins, places, programs, and pagan culture which the heathen promote. This sometimes calls for complete withdrawal (1 Tim. 6:5) and the renouncing (disowning or repudiation) of every wicked way (2 Cor. 4:2). The principle that is taught for Bible separation is easy to see. Don’t mix with the unsaved by participating with their sins and creating close ties and unions with those who are not God’s own people (2 Cor. 6:17 – “come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord”).

God is saying this. Here is the entire teaching on separation in a nutshell. Don’t create close bonds with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14) and begin to fellowship with their sins and with those who are walking a different path and going in a different direction. If you do, sooner or later you will be burned! Come out! You be separate! Don’t join them in their manner of lifestyle. Don’t link up with them in close companionships (2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33) and participate with their way of life. If we keep ourselves from unequal yokes (close ties with the unsaved) it will keep us from contamination. Come out! You be separate! This is what God says! Does this mean anything to you? It should mean something to you and motivate you to live the Christian life, so that you can keep yourself separate and pure from a pagan society, with the end result of pleasing God. We should want to live the Christian so that we can remain pure and separate from the pagan society that surrounds us.

## #48 Because of Obedience to God

We should want to live the Christian life simply because we want to obey God and do what is right. God is looking for our sincere obedience today. Let us remember one thing. It's always right to do right. It's never right to do wrong in order to do right. This is the philosophy of pragmatism. We must always do right! God is looking for our obedience today – not our compromises. God does not want our opinions and ideas but our obedience.

1 Samuel 15:22

“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

We should memorize verse 22. It is one of the classics in the Word of God. Obedience first, last, and always! It is the watchword of those who want to serve and please the Lord. The people were evidently just going through the motions of sacrificing animals but they didn't really have an obedient heart and mind. In other words, their hearts were not in their sacrifices. This is what Samuel is condemning. He is condemning mindless, heartless, and legalistic service. *When a person sacrifices and serves without an obedient heart they really are not obeying.* This is why Samuel says, “to obey is better than sacrifice.” Although the people were sacrificing animals they weren't obeying from their hearts. They had the outward actions but they were really disobedient from the heart.

This disobedience or rebellion was likened to witchcraft. Witches and God's people have something in common. They both open themselves up to demonic intrusion into their lives. When we are disobedient its because we are like a witch. We have opened ourselves to the workings of Satan and his underworld. What a frightening reality this is! We don't have to be mixing up potions and casting spells on people to be influenced by the devil and demons. We can simply be rebellious!

Erdmann comments:

“In the following words: To obey is better than sacrifice, the thought takes a new turn: apart from what alone is well-pleasing to God, only an obedient disposition of mind is in itself something good, the offering, without such a disposition, is not a good thing, has no moral value. ... So disobedience and the thence-resulting rebellion and defiant self-dependence is similar in essence to, stands on the same moral plane with the outward wickedness of *witchcraft*, that is, “divination in the service of anti-godly demonic powers” (Keil), and of idolatry.”

God is looking for our obedience today. Why shouldn't we want to obey God? We don't want to be influenced by the world of the devil and demons by disobeying Him and failing to live for Christ. This is reason enough to live the Christian life.

“Do Right till the stars fall  
Do Right till the last call  
Do right when you're all alone

#### #49

### **Because of Our Conscience Before God**

We should desire to live the Christian life so that we have a good conscience before God. Paul wanted to live in such a way that he would not offend God. He wanted to live knowing that his conscience was clear in relationship to God and the way he was living.

Acts 24:16

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

Paul did not want to play the hypocrite game. He wanted to truly have an open, clean, and ongoing relationship with the Lord that was reflected in the way he lived. His motive for living the Christian life was to live in such a way that his life would be blameless and free from the contamination of sin (“a conscience void of offence toward God” – see also Acts 23:1).



Philippians 1:10

“That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.”

The word “offence” means that we should have no strikes against us when Jesus returns. We should be blameless and living morally upright and pure when Christ appears. Without offense does not mean a Christian will be sinless. We all commit sins. However, the blameless person is the one who confesses and forsakes sin (1 John 1:9), asks forgiveness from those whom we have wronged (James 5:16), and makes restitution whenever possible (Matt. 18:15). Living a life without offence means we will get right with God and with others (Eph. 4:32). Do we really want to meet Jesus Christ with an unforgiving spirit? We should want to live the Christian life so we can be without offense when Christ returns. We should live in such a way that we can face Christ with confidence (1 John 2:28), knowing that we have maintained a pure and wholesome relationship with Him. We should want to meet Him with a clear conscience and without any known offence.

“Faithful and true would He find us here,  
If He should come today?  
Watching in gladness and not in fear  
If He should come today?”

## **#50**

### **Because of the Destruction of God**

2 Peter 3:11

“Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness”

Peter tells us the world is going to someday blow up! In view of this coming judgment upon the earth, we should gain perspective on that which is eternal and live a holy and godly life, or a life that will count for eternity. Peter reminds us of the passing nature of this world. Why should we live for earthly things when someday everything associated with this world will be destroyed?

Everything material has the stamp of oblivion upon it. To live for material things is to live for the temporary. We should choose to live for eternity rather than time. This will cause us to emphasize the spiritual rather than the material, or choose the permanent over the passing. 1 John 2:17 says that “the world passeth away.” This helps us to keep perspective. The world in which we live and attach ourselves to is going to be blown up! In other words, the world has no lasting or eternal value. This is why need to live separate and holy and do the will of God. Since the world is passing away only godly living and service is going to last in the way of reward.

When you stand before Him, and all that is earthly and temporal has vanished away, what riches of eternal value will you have (Matt. 6:19-20)? Oh dear friend, the world is passing away even as we speak. Let us put our hand to the plow and not look back!

1 John 2:17 says:

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

The world system is transitory! It is in the continual process of disintegration and destruction from a spiritual perspective. John says that it is passing away. The continuous present tense is used “is passing away.” *This means the world system is passing out of existence even as we speak because the world has no lasting value attached to it and no future reward surrounding it.* Therefore, its pride, purposes, pursuits, places, pomp, and personal materialism or glory are seen to be passing away even as we speak. There is absolutely no lasting value in the storehouse and bank of the world system because everything that we invest in this world will not matter for eternity.

John is contrasting two ways of life: a life lived for eternity and a life lived for time. A worldly minded person lives for fleshly things and the pride of life, the vainglory that appeals to men, but a Christian who does the will of God lives for God’s approval. And the Scripture says this person “abideth forever” with God’s approval and reward. The sense of “abideth” is that a person will live on and possess eternal reward and riches that will never end. *The emphasis is not abiding with eternal salvation but eternal reward.* There are times in Scripture

when eternal life is viewed as a future inheritance or quality of life revolving around blessing and reward based upon our present-day living (Matt. 19:29; Galatians, 6:8; Rom. 6:22). The worldly person will not abide with the eternal things that will last but the person who does the will of God will abide forever with God's spiritual rewards and riches.

Dr. F. B. Meyer tells of going to a meeting of the Salvation Army where it was announced an exhibition of idols was to be displayed. He said, "I expected to see idols from India, Africa, and the South Seas. But instead of that eight young men stepped to the rear of the platform and returned, each bearing a large sheet of cardboard. One card was covered with pipes, cigars, and tobacco; another with sham jewelry, feathers, ribbons and things of that sort. There were eight cards, each covered with things that had been idols to some. "A man behind me pointed and said, "That was my pipe." A woman said, "See my bow of ribbon?" These simple people felt that these things had become idols to them and they had given them up." Why? It's because the things of this world have no eternal value.

The world is passing away even as we speak! When a bank is breaking, smart people do not deposit in it. When the foundation is crumbling, intelligent builders do not proceed. The point is this. There are no eternal dividends attached to the things of this world. Only what's done for Christ will last. Living for the world is like rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking ship. This verse (1 John 2:17) was the life verse of D. L. Moody, the great evangelist, and it's inscribed on his tombstone: "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." This means that when we live for God and follow His will for our lives we will abide with God forever having great reward, recognition, and honor.

The thrust of this verse is that when we live for the fleeting things of this world we will miss out on a future that is filled with great spiritual reward and blessing. However, when we choose to actively serve the Lord and follow His will for our lives we will have a future of great reward and happiness that will go on for eternity. We can either abide with God forever possessing great reward and eternal riches or abide with God forever possessing minimal spiritual reward and riches. How you live today will affect how you live in eternity. Spiritual Christians

keep themselves “loosely attached” to this world because they live for something far better and something that is eternal.

If we live the Christian life effectively and truly Love the Lord, then we will not look back with regrets and disappointments at the end of our lives.

“I looked upon a farm one day.  
That once I used to own;  
The barn had fallen to the ground.  
The fields were overgrown.

The house in which my children grew.  
Where we had lived for years --  
I turned to see it broken down.  
And brushed aside the tears.

I looked upon my soul one day.  
To find it too had grown  
With thorns and nettles everywhere.  
The seeds neglect had sown.

The years had passed while I had cared  
For things of lesser worth:  
The things of Heaven I let go  
When minding things of Earth.

To Christ I turned with bitter tears.  
And cried, "O Lord, forgive!  
I haven't much time left for Thee,  
Not many years to live."

The wasted years forever gone,  
The days I can't recall;  
If I could live those days again.  
I'd make Him Lord of all."