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The Biblical Christian Life – Teacher's Guide

Overview

The Church of God, here on earth, is comprised of those men and women willing to live for the Lord Jesus Christ at whatever cost, to the despoiling of their goods, to poverty, to tribulation, and even to death. A company of people banded together by the Spirit of God in love for Jesus Christ, in worship of the Triune God, and in mutual strength and encouragement and in witness.

In *The Biblical Christian Life*, we learn the only reason for the Church existing is to glorify the Lord through the lives of its members and to bring Him honor, fame, praise and love. Thus in this theme we explore the normal life of the genuine Christian; a journey of sanctification, a perfecting or maturing into the likeness and fullness of Jesus Christ. Marked by trials, tribulations, triumph and the revelation of the Holy Spirit, we discover each person, growing into perfection, is revealing the power and character of Christ through: (a) intercession for sinners, (b) power over Satan, (c) fruit of the Spirit-filled life, (d) witness for Christ and (e) gifts of the Spirit.

Required reading for this teaching program includes *The Judgment Throne of Christ* by Michael McPherson. Recommended reading includes *Unveiling God's Church* by Paris Reidhead.

Discussion Guide

Definitions

Define who is a Christian

- The Greek definition of “disciple” is mathētēs (from math-, the "mental effort needed to think something through") – properly, a learner; a disciple, a follower of Christ who learns the doctrines of Scripture and the lifestyle they require.
- In the New Testament we see the word “Christian” used in Acts 14:5. The Greek is “Christos” which Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance defines as “a follower of Christ”

What does it mean to follow and obey Christ?

- The Lord tells us that to follow Him, means we must obey and love him more than anything else in the world. You are to sacrifice your personal desires, even your life for Him. (Luke 9:23) “Then he said to them all, "If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.”
- Using the negative, he says no one can call themselves Christian (defined as a follower of Christ) if they do not follow Him. “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26-27)
- Therefore, if a person is not a follower of Christ as defined by the Lord himself, he cannot lay claim to be a Christian; no matter how many professions of faith or “decisions for Christ” he has made.
- (Mark 10:17-27) In the story of the rich young ruler, the Scriptures say the Lord looked at him and loved him. This man had obeyed the Ten Commandments from youth. He honored his father and mother, was generous to the poor and worshipped Jehovah God. There was no wrong found in him. He knelt before the Lord, in respect, and asked “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- Then the Lord put him to the test and said “follow me.” Follow me even if it means the despoiling of all your goods and possessions. The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. Love not the things of the world but love God.
- And at that command the man went away grieved, for he had great wealth and loved all he possessed in the world. You see this man desired to be in Heaven, he wanted eternal life, but he never desired God. Dear friend, Heaven is heaven because of the presence of God. And without God, Heaven would be Hell.

- The Lord would then look to his disciples and say “How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!” In this context wealth is not just money or material things, but anything and everything that a person holds dear to his heart. Abraham is called the father of our faith because what was dearest to his heart, Isaac his beloved son, he surrendered even unto death when the Lord commanded, “follow me.”
- The crux of the matter is before us. To follow Christ is not a matter of morality, or just obedience, but a matter of the heart. Has there been a transaction in your heart, so that you know the Lord, hear his voice, desire his lordship over your life and have purposed to follow him, even unto death?
- When God performs a miracle on the human heart, when the Spirit of Christ comes to dwell in a man’s soul, that person is willing to stand with the loss of all things and to the suffering of all grief and agony. Dear friend, the crown of life will only be given to those who prove themselves faithful to the Lord Almighty.

What is sanctification?

- In the New Testament the Greek word used for sanctification is “hagiasmós” (a masculine noun derived from ἅγιος /hágios, "holy"). It is defined as the process of advancing in holiness which means to be set apart for God’s use. The sanctified believer is being progressively transformed by the Lord into His likeness (similarity of nature).
- (1 Corinthians 1:2) “To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours:”
- Another translation of this verse reads: “To God's church that was made holy by Christ Jesus and called to be God's holy people in the city of Corinth and to people everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

Is sanctification something a believer does through his own efforts?

- No. Jesus Christ is our sanctification. (1 Corinthians 1:40). Sanctification is not an outward – in process, but rather an inward-out process. The believer who has received the Spirit of Christ, who is born again, begins to be pruned and molded, each according to his measure of faith, into the image of the Lord Jesus.
- The believer on his part must continually surrender to the will of God, abandon himself to the Lord, and give himself to the study of His Word
- It is God the Father that does the pruning to conform the believer. (John 15:2) “I am the true vine, and My Father is the keeper of the vineyard. He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes to make it even more fruitful.”

Commentary - Matthew Henry (1 Corinthians 1:30)

- “Often, a humble Christian, though poor as to this world, has more true knowledge of the gospel, than those who have made the letter of Scripture the study of their lives, but who have studied it rather as the witness of men, than as the word of God. And even young children have gained such knowledge of Divine truth as to silence infidels. The reason is, they are taught of God; the design is, that no flesh should glory in his presence. That distinction, in which alone they might glory, was not of themselves. It was by the sovereign choice and regenerating grace of God, that they were in Jesus Christ by faith.
- He is made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; all we need, or can desire. And he is made wisdom to us, that by his word and Spirit, and from his fullness and treasures of wisdom and knowledge, we may receive all that will make us wise unto salvation, and fit for every service to which we are called.
- We are guilty, liable to just punishment; and he is made righteousness, our great atonement and sacrifice. We are depraved and corrupt, and he is made sanctification, that he may in the end be made complete redemption; may free the soul from the being of sin, and loose the body from the bonds of the grave. And this is, that all flesh, according to the prophecy by Jeremiah, (Jeremiah 9:23-24), may glory in the special favour, all-sufficient grace, and precious salvation of Jehovah.”

Define the Christian Church according to the Scriptures.

- (Matthew 18:20) “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” In its most basic unit, the Church of Jesus Christ is where two or three are gathered in worship of Christ. Then the Lord tells us His Church is not defined by a site or geography, and that true worship begins with the indwelling Christ in the believer; for God is Spirit and those who worship Him must also be of the Spirit.
- (John 4:21-24) “Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth”

What is the purpose of the Church of Jesus Christ?

- In Revelation Chapter 1 God’s Church is described as a candlestick. But the flame, the light of the candlestick comes not from the wick, but from the Lord Himself. The Church has no power by itself. He alone holds the power to give light when He is in the midst of those gathered in His

name. The Church is to be a reflection of Him, the “light of the world” (John 8:12) that whosoever follows him will find eternal life, peace and joy.

- The Church would be comprised of born again people with diverse gifts given by the Holy Spirit. Some would be pastors, teachers, apostles, or have the gift of healing, others would be workers of miracles, have the utterance of wisdom and still more gifts would abound (1 Corinthians 12). “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- All these gifts were given to help perfect each member in the Body, to help them grow and mature into the fullness of Jesus Christ for the work of the ministry. (Ephesians 4:7-16) Then to support, strengthen and sustain the members as an outpost of the Kingdom of God, in a land governed by the enemy of God who seeks to kill and destroy.

Describe the image of Christ in the Book of Revelation. How do we know this is the eternal image of the Lord? Why does the Scripture reveal this image of Christ to his Church?

- (Revelation 1:12-18) “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was One like the Son of Man, dressed in a long robe, with a golden sash around His chest. The hair of His head was white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like a blazing fire. His feet were like polished bronze refined in a furnace, and His voice was like the roar of many waters. He held in His right hand seven stars, and a sharp double-edged sword came from His mouth. His face was like the sun shining at its brightest.”
- “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. But He placed His right hand on me and said, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last, the Living One. I was dead, and behold, now I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of Death and of Hades.”
- This description of Christ is the same vision told by Daniel hundreds of years before the birth of Christ. “His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.” (Daniel 10:6)
- The Lord here is revealing to His Church His actual being, His true form. The Lord Jesus is deity, God that had come to earth in the form of human flesh. No longer the meek and suffering lamb that came to take away the sins of the world, but Lord Jesus, King of kings, who sits at the right hand of the Father, the Ancient One. Through whom the world and all things were created. A majestic, powerful figure in the presence of whom every knee will bow and confess to be Lord. (Romans 14:11)
- The Book of Revelation is the unveiling of Jesus Christ, as he is today, which God gave to Him to show His servants. The Lord is coming soon, not as a bruised sacrifice but as Judge and King and Deity. (Revelation 14:7) “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

- Lord Jesus is the head of the true Church. Not man. And as we will see in the critiques of the seven churches in the Book of Revelation, every Christian will be held accountable for his works before Christ. Those that comprise His Church are commanded to be holy, to keep the gathering pure and free from false teachers and dead faith, to hold fast to their first love, to guard their hearts against spiritual pride, and to be faithful unto death.

God's will for His Church

What characterizes the churches that are blessed by God? (Rev. 2-3)

- The churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum and Philadelphia were commended for maintaining their purity, steadfastness to the Word and faithfulness to Christ. They rejected those who came in the name of Christ but were found to be false apostles, evil and counterfeit Christians sent by Satan.
- “If there is to be a reconciling of the unsaved to Jesus Christ, then the Church must be clean.” Paris Reidhead.
- “When someone came to them with some manner of doctrine and teaching, claiming to be apostles, they tested it by the Word. And if it did not match up to the Word, they did not accept it. But they owned these people for what they were, as liars, refused to hear them. This is, of course, one of the characteristics of maturity in the Christian life, and by this testimony Christ says to a degree they were mature.”
- These churches patiently endured trials, tribulations and suffering because of the name of Jesus. They labored to share the Gospel and were opposed constantly. However, their faith never grew weary even in the face of death.

What are the four issues that can bring a church under condemnation? (Rev. 2-3)

(1) A heart that grows cold

- The church at Ephesus labored to proclaim the Gospel. The members offered to God intercessory prayers for the lost, they took authority and rebuked evil spirits so the blind could see, they were witnesses for the Lord Jesus. Members preached, they taught, they fed the poor and comforted one another in the face of Satanic attacks. This church were true laborers with Christ. And the Lord commended them for their works.
- Yet, in the midst of all this ministry and labor, the time they used to spend communing with Christ waned. Their conversations in private prayers, the tears of gratitude and remembrance, hymns sung in love and daily praises were abandoned.
- Perhaps no better story of what happened to this church can be given than the one concerning Martha and Mary. (Luke 10:38-42)
- “Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and

listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.”

- The Lord Jesus was saying, listen Martha, remember; the greatest commandment is for thee to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength. There will be time for labor, but without love all is for naught. As Mary sat at the Lord’s feet she adored him, and no doubt wept as she realized she was in the presence of deity. There was a desire for Him, a longing to stay in his presence and listen to each word that poured from his lips.
- (Revelation 2:4-5) “Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”
- Oh how important and significant it is to the Lord that we love him more than any labor or ministry. In the case of Ephesus, their ministry had become an idol and took the place in their hearts reserved for the Lord God. These Ephesians had committed a grave sin. And thus our Lord would command them to “repent.” The Church, the men and women of God, must remember the thing God treasures most above all ministry and labor, is the love and time we spend with him.

(2) Polluted doctrines and counterfeit believers

- The churches at Pergamum and Thyatira had tolerated within its gathering professing Christians who held the doctrines of the Nicolaitans, Balaam and Jezebel. These doctrines were meant to entice the saints into sin. Agents of Satan had come into the fold. Ravenous wolves dressed as sheep of God. They knew that sin in the church would cause separation between God and His people. They wanted to ruin the testimony of the church and extinguish the light of the Gospel to save lives and thwart Satan.

Commentary – Paris Reidhead

- “Here is the doctrine of holiness, and that God hates sin, and that he that commits sin is of the Devil regardless of how many times he has been baptized, what church he belongs to, or how many Scripture verses he can quote.”
- “The doctrine of the Nicolaitans was, “As long as you believe, it does not make any difference how you live.” But we understand the Word of God to teach that “the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”
- “Now Christ establishes the condition for fellowship and blessing. Repent. You of the Nicolaitans, repent. You of the Balaamites, repent. Repent is the word. Change your mind about this. Give it up. Cease immediately. Or else, says He. What does He say? I’ll call a council and

have you excommunicated? I'll have your name stricken off the roll? Is that what He says? No. That is not what He said."

- "He says, "Or I will come quickly and I will fight against thee." Do you see? Jesus Christ is particularly concerned about the city church. And he knows that it is the place where the seat of Satan is, and He knows that it is going to be that those who sin after the order of Balaam and the Nicolaitans that pollute it."
- "He did not say "I will wipe away the church." He did not say "I will remove your candlestick." He does later. But He says, I am speaking now to those of the Nicolaitans that I am speaking to those of the Balaamites. If you do not repent, I will come quickly and I will fight against them. I will fight against them."
- "I believe that we have got to understand that Jesus Christ has here made it perfectly clear that He is at any price going to have His testimony. He is going to have a people that hate sin, that will not tolerate the Balaamites, nor the Nicolaitans, will not tolerate truth that does not strike at the root cord of avarice, and covetousness, and immorality and uncleanness. The Lord Jesus is going to have a people for Himself, a people that are His."

(3) Dead Faith

- (Revelation 3:1-4) "I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God. Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you. Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy."
- The church at Sardis was an affluent church that had a reputation for being vibrant and full of activity and life. Yet the Lord called most of its members "dead." Sardis had heard the Gospel, believed it, were awakened to their condition but never came to the stage where they bore fruit for God. They were unconverted, professing Christians who "honored Christ with their lips, but their hearts were far from him" (Matthew 15:8). All those Christ ever called "dead" in the New Testament were people still in the kingdom of darkness, still servants of Satan destined for destruction.
- The story of the sower gives us some insight to what happened at Sardis.
- (Mark 4:16-20) 'And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.'

- The church at Sardis had professing Christians that represented all three groups spoken of in this Scripture. All professed Christ but only one group heard the Word, were awakened to their condition, convicted of sin, repented unto the Lord God, were forgiven of sin, were born again and had the witness of God that they were His children (Galatians 4:6). These bore much fruit to the glory of God.
- How did this last group bear fruit? (John 15:4) “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch is not able to bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither you, unless you abide in Me.” Dear friend, the only way a believer can abide in Christ and Christ abide in him, is when the miracle of the new birth happens and the Spirit of Christ comes in and gives that man or woman a new spirit and heart to love God. (Ezekiel 36:26). The Spirit of Christ, however, never comes into the impenitent heart of a sinner.
- The Lord spoke to the messenger at this church because only God could see the heart. All the folks in the church looked alike. However, only one group was anchored to the Rock, and the rest were set on sand.

Commentary – Paris Reidhead

- “This is why so many are going to miss Heaven; this is why they have a name to live and are dead. They have the plan of salvation in their intellects, in their memories, but not in their hearts. This is why we must be watchful. Lest we should make the sad mistake of confusing what our intellect sees and perceives with what our hearts experience.”

(4) Spiritual Pride

- The church at Laodicea was wealthy. However, unlike Sardis, the Lord never said they were dead and under the threat of Judgment along with the world. Their sin, their crime, was spiritual pride. (Revelation 3:15) “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit [vomit] you out of my mouth.’
- Things had gotten so bad God was about to give this entire church over to Satan to be chastened. I believe this is what is meant when he said he would vomit them out of his mouth. “The Lord will judge His people. “...it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:30-31)
- The Lord said he knew “their works” and found them severely lacking. No longer were they fervent in intercessory prayer for the lost, no longer zealous to witness for the Lord and proclaim the virtues of him who brought them out of darkness into light, no longer were they engaged in battle with Satan, for Satan had nothing to fear from this bunch. The tenderness and compassion for those perishing had withered. The burden of Christ had left Laodicea.
- The Lord called them lukewarm. They were going through the motions of Christian labor and ministry. If their works were found cold, or dead, then it would signal a condition where the

heart was destitute of Christ. But their ministry was lukewarm. Their heart was once on fire for Christ and had cooled. Why? The reason we learn was spiritual pride and complacency.

- Laodicea had been blessed and believed they had such favor with the Lord nothing more was required. “We have need of nothing” was their cry. The pride of life infiltrated their minds and thinking. A great evil, a grave sin had occurred. They lost their humility and gloried in themselves.
- “...no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:29-31).
- Because of their pride the Lord was very hard and harsh with this group. He reminded them they were “wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked” without Christ. “...how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot-- a human being, who is only a worm!” (Job 25:6) Man came from dust and to dust he will return without the glory of God that brings him from death to life. How far the Laodiceans had fallen in their state of pride.
- But God shows himself merciful. He says those he loves he reproves and disciplines so he commands them to repent and “burn with zeal” for the things of God. Thus we are cautioned in Proverbs 4:23, “Above everything else guard your heart, because from it flow the springs of life.”

God's will for His Children

Describe the attributes of the Christian life according to the Bible?

- Imitators of Christ (his ministry and works) (1 Corinthians 11:1, Ephesians 5:1, Luke 6:36)
- A life of holiness (purity of heart) (Leviticus 11:45, 1 Peter 1:15-16)
- Obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:5)
- Overcomers (self, the world, the Devil) (1 John, Revelation 2,3)
- Hatred of sin (in self, the world) (1 John, Jude 1:23, Romans 7, Proverbs 6:16-17; 8:13, Psalm 97:10)
- Love of Christ, God the Father, the brethren, neighbors, and enemies (1 John 3;14, Luke 6:35, Galatians 5:14)
- Faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10)
- Gifts of the Spirit
- Fruit of the Spirit

These attributes characterize the two or three that gather in the name of Christ. Anything more than this are the doctrines of men.

Commentary – Marks of the true Christian (Romans 12:9-21)

- “Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.
- Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.
- The above verses are the manifestation of the “fruit of the Spirit.” Here we see Christianity is not a series of dos and don’ts, but a supernatural manifestation of the indwelling Christ that turns a sinner into a child of the living God.

What is the will of God for the Christian? Is this the same for all Christians?

- To grow into the fullness of knowledge of God and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ for the work of ministry. Yes

What is a “measure of faith” in the Biblical Christian life? (Romans 12:3-6)

- Faith (pístis) is defined in the Greek texts as the “persuasion of God” in the life of the believer. The Lord continually births faith in the yielded believer who is exhorted to grow up in Christ so he or she can know the perfect will of God.
- A measure of faith describes that divine proportion of God’s grace given to each believer to carry out God’s eternal plan and purpose for the individual and the Church of Jesus Christ.
- The Apostle Paul, had a greater filling, if you will, of Christ to do the works prepared for him. Great suffering he endured as well as considerable gifts to wield the power of God. A different measure of faith and filling of the Spirit is given to you and me to accomplish the will of God for our lives. Therefore, no one is ever to judge their walk with Christ against another, as each has a different role to play, or a different measure of faith, in the Body of Christ.
- However, while each is given a certain measure of faith, we are all called into one ministry; to be imitators of Christ. All Christians are called to intercede for the lost, be a witness for Christ, to rebuke the Devil, proclaim the Gospel, and allow Christ to live his life through us.

What are the gifts of the Spirit? What are their purpose in the life of the believer?

- (1 Corinthians 12:4) “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.”
- (Romans 12:4-8) “For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”
- (Ephesians 4:7-13) “However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. That is why the Scriptures say, “When he ascended to the heights, he led a crowd of captives and gave gifts to his people.” Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.”
- “Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and

build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ."

- Spiritual gifts are given to the individual for the benefit of the Church of Jesus Christ. Gifts are for the common good of the Church. Each helps to build wisdom, give testimony, comfort, heal, teach, sustain and proclaim the promises and presence of God to His people. They are never for show, to make profit, or to create a spectacle.

What is the fruit of the Spirit? The fruit is evidence of what in the life of the believer? When does the fruit of the Spirit manifest itself?

- In Matthew 13:23 we are told God's Word will produce various proportions of "fruit" in the believer. And then again in John 15:5 the Lord says the believer must abide in him, and he in them to produce much fruit.
- This fruit is the divine revelation of the indwelling Christ in the believer.
- (Galatians 5:22-23) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law"
- (Colossians 3) "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
- (Ephesians 5:9) "for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth."
- The fruit of the Spirit is the evidence of the indwelling Christ. It is not morality, nor is it being a nice and generous person. When we bear much fruit we glorify God and the miracle he has wrought in the heart of a sinful man.
- A man that once hated and persecuted Christians now endures all suffering to rescue his former enemies. Such is the story of Saul of Tarsus who bore much fruit to the glory of God. However, there is a battle that must be won before the Christian can bear much fruit.

What is the battle that must be won to bear fruit?

- (Galatians 5:17) "The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires."

These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions.”

- The overcomer of the sinful nature is the one who reckons or considers himself in union with Christ Jesus. In union with him on the Cross, in death to self and dispositions; in union with him in burial, to the lusts of the world; and in union in his resurrection to take authority over principalities and powers. (Romans 6:1-14)
- The more we abide in Christ, in union with him in all three areas, the more he abides in us and the more we overcome our sinful nature, bearing fruit to the glory of God Almighty. (Romans 7:4)

What are traits of the old nature the Christian is to put to death?

- (Colossians 3:1-11). “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”
- “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.”

How does the will of God for the Christian differ from the purpose of the Church?

- God’s purpose for the individual believer is to grow into the fullness of knowledge of God and to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ for the work of the ministry. The Church is God’s instrument for perfecting, equipping and sustaining the believer for the work of Christ. It is to be the full reflection of the Body and personality of Christ in the world.
- The Church is also described as the “Bride of Christ.” (Ephesians 5:23-27)
- “For the husband is head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a glorious church, without stain or wrinkle or any such blemish, but holy and blameless.”
- In its essence, the Church is the collection of people the Lord has chosen out of the world, birthed by His Spirit, to be His own. (Deuteronomy 7:6). A people wholly committed to Him, who will love, obey and worship Him.

Can genuine Christians be found in denominations considered heretical?

- Yes. In the Kingdom of God there are no denominations. However, while we are here on earth, for many reasons, there are demarcations, groups and separations. And some groups the Scriptures say are antichrists. However, even in these groups God's people can be found. To these the message from the Lord is clear; "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying: "Come out of her, my people, so that you may not have fellowship in her sins, and so that you may not receive of her plagues." (Revelation 18:4)
- And again He says, "Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you," (2 Corinthians 6:17)

The Biblical Christian Life

Why has God purposed that every Christian is to grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ?

- The Lord's plan for His people, His Church, from the very beginning was for them to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6) The people "are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). Peter then says, "...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, to proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9)
- From the formation of Israel the people of God were to be the Lord's instrument to proclaim His name in a world filled with idols and false gods headed for destruction. God's people would be the light of the world; the way, the life and the truth in a world of darkness. And the King of God's people is the Lord Jesus who is the embodiment of what the people were to become. (Romans 8:29). And it is only as each Christian grows into the fullness of Jesus Christ that the Church can be that light on a hill to proclaim the mercies of God in a world governed by the evil one.
- Then as Christ is our High Priest, we are also to be priests. And the role of the priest in the Scriptures is to give spiritual sacrifices. The first offering we make on the altar of sacrifice, is our own spirit to be broken before God. "The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God." (Psalm 51:10-17) This prayer is for God to create in us a clean heart, for only the pure in heart will see the face of God (Matthew 5:8).
- The Apostle Paul goes further and says spiritual worship is more than a repentant heart. "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship." (Romans 12:1). Our continual prayers and worship to God are for him to fill us with His Spirit so that we may become vessels for His will, His work and His mercies.
- Then as our High Priest Jesus Christ has done for us, we are to go before God as intercessors, offering prayers and supplications for our neighbors.

What are the pre-requisites to living a Biblical Christian life?

- The Biblical Christian life, according to the Scriptures, starts with the acknowledgement of who a Christian is. It is the one who has agreed with the Word of God. He has seen himself as a sinner, under condemnation. He has been convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, repented, pleaded for mercy, believed on the Lord Jesus and surrendered his life to be a bondservant, to serve Christ all the days of his life.
- The Lord Jesus has said if you will not love him more than anything and anyone else in this world, you cannot claim to be a Christian. (Luke 14:26) Our purpose is to please God in all things.

What is the lifestyle the redeemed are to live? Why?

- A life of holiness, continual purification and growth in the knowledge of God. Because we are to be witnesses for God, a living testimony to his goodness and righteousness. When those who profess to be children of God, live like the heathens around them, we bring shame to the name of the Lord. (Ezekiel 36:20) “But when they were scattered among the nations, they brought shame on my holy name. For the nations said, ‘These are the people of the LORD, but he couldn’t keep them safe in his own land!’ Then I was concerned for my holy name, on which my people brought shame among the nations.”
- Peter then tells us the false teachers who corrupt the teaching of Christ will bring slander and disrepute to God because people will believe them to be Christian. (1 Peter 2:2) “Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered.”
- (Leviticus 19:2) – “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”
- (Matthew 5:48) – “You shall be perfect, therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect.” The word “perfect” used here has the Greek definition of “complete in all parts, fully grown, mature.” What the Lord is saying is that the will of God for every born again Christian is to grow in maturity to the fullness of knowledge of God Almighty and be conformed to the likeness and image of Christ, the first born of the brethren (Romans 8:29).
- (1 Peter 1:16-17) – “...for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.” Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives in reverent fear during your temporary stay on earth.”
- (2 Corinthians 7:1)- “Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God”
- (1 Peter 2:11-12) – “Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from the desires of the flesh, which war against your soul. Conduct yourselves with such honor among the Gentiles that, though they slander you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us”
- (1 Peter 2:13) – “Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to the king as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent by him to punish evildoers and praise well doers. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

- (1 Peter 2:21-23) – “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His footsteps: “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth.” When they heaped abuse on Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats, but entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.”

What are all redeemed, born again men and women, called to do by Christ?

- The universal commandment is to “follow” Him. “If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, My servant will be as well. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.” (John 12:26)
- Next, He calls us to be a witness for Christ. (1 Peter 2:9) - “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, to proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”

Describe the earthly ministry of the Lord

- (Luke 4:18-21) – “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
- To save His people from their sins, the Lord preached the good news, that when Adam sinned all sinned and that God had decreed the soul that sins must die. Yet, the mercy and grace of our Lord has come so the spiritual blindness that covers the minds of men, set upon them by the god of this world, Satan, may be removed. And once removed, men can see and understand the glorious grace of the Lord and repent so their lives may be saved. And to demonstrate the grace and power of the Lord the people would be healed, demons would be exorcised, and sins would be forgiven. And the propitiation for sin, to satisfy the penalty of sin, would be the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the Cross at Calvary. Thus the captives, those who repented, would be set free from death and the bondage of Satan.
- (Matthew 11:15) “...the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”
- This is the same message foretold by Isaiah that would describe the Messiah: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” (Isaiah 61:1)

What is the ministry all Christians are called to perform?

- We are called to imitate the ministry of Christ. (Ephesians 5:1) “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.”
- In Isaiah 58:5-10 the Lord describes what he calls acceptable worship. This worship is in essence the calling for every believer that imitates the ministry of Christ:
- “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?...If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday... you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.”

Commentary

- Discernment is needed here to see the remarkable message given by God Himself to the Israelites which details acceptable worship. This message is the calling for every believer. It describes how we are to imitate Christ as priests of the Most High.
- Believers are called to free the oppressed from the bondages of wickedness and break the forces that yoke or keep the people in captivity. The bread is the Word of God and the hungry, naked and homeless are lost people. They are repentant sinners seeking the Kingdom of God. Believers are called to cover these (as intercessors) and not to hide from them. “Your own flesh” refers to one’s brothers or neighbors. Thus the commandment is fulfilled to love one’s neighbor and brother in Christ as God loves us.
- We are commanded to remove the yoke from our midst, which is to rebuke the Devil and cleanse all evil from our own lives. Then we are to pour ourselves out for the lost as Christ poured himself out on the Cross for us. Those that fulfill this calling shall reconcile men unto God, they are repairers of the breach between man and God. They restore man to the position Adam once held in the Garden of Eden. The redeemed then will dwell in the Kingdom of Heaven forever. These believers that fulfill their calling will be lights in a world of darkness.

How does a Christian fulfill his calling described in Isaiah 58:5-10?

- It begins by abiding in Christ. Then we must seek, have a desire to receive, all that God has purposed and provided through Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

- It is ours, as individual members of the Body, to seek that the authority of Christ shall come with full acceptance into our spirits. It is not enough to know and acknowledge that He is our fullness; there must be as well the apprehension of the complementary truth that we are also His fullness (See Ephesians 1: 23)
- Christians are called heirs of God, and “joint heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17) which affords us certain privileges and authority

What authority is given to the Christian?

- To be a priest unto the Most High and reign on earth
- (Revelation 1:6) – “...and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”
- (Revelation 5:10) – “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”
- (Exodus 19:6) – “And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.’ This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.”
- (1 Peter 2:5) – “you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”
- (Ephesians 2:10) – “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.” – These “good works” refer to the works of Christ in His ministry, as we are to be imitators of Christ. It does not, in this context, refer to general good deeds that even the heathen can do. (Matthew 5:46). Even though it is accepted that the Christian will be kind and generous. However, kindness and generosity are not the signs of a genuine Christian, but he who follows Christ.

What power is given to the Christian?

- To have dominion over principalities and powers, oneself, and to witness for Christ with power (effect). She will also have the protection of God against all things and be able to wield the power of God according to His will.
- (Exodus 14:15-16) “Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to Me? Tell the sons of Israel to go forward. “As for you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land.”
- (Matthew 21:21) - "And Jesus answered them, “Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen.”

- (Acts 8:4-8) – “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them. The crowds gave their undivided attention to Philip’s message and the signs they saw him perform. With loud shrieks, unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, and many of the paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city”
- (Luke 10:17) – “The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!”
- (John 14:12) – “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”
- (Matthew 28:19) – ““Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,”
- (Mark 16:15) – ““Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not harm them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will be made well.”
- (Acts 1:8) – “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

What is the Christian’s posture against the Devil?

- He is to have dominion over the defeated enemy. (Romans 16:20) – “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”
- (James 4:7) – “So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
- (Ephesians 6:16) – “In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;”
- (Ephesians 2:6) – “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,” Seated with Christ he imbues us with his strength and His power to defeat the enemies of God.
- (Ephesians 1:3) – “All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ”

END