

August 2018

Dear Brethren:

Greetings, our brothers and sisters in the Faith, from all of us here in Mindanao, Philippines.

Ever wonder why schoolteachers drill young students on basics like addition, subtraction, and the alphabet? Consider this: those few simple exercises are the foundation that all future learning—and all future success—is built upon. That is also true of your life as a Christian. If your spiritual building blocks are firmly in place, you have a strong foundation to support your future growth and to withstand even the worst of life's pressures.

One of the most notable conversations from the Gospels was between Jesus and Nicodemus. Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish council, went to Jesus during the night to discover how to live the Christian life. Jesus explained to Nicodemus that he must be born again: "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, *New King James Version*). The hope of salvation is the beginning step in living a Christian life. In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (*NKJV*).

What Is Christian Living?

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven . . . For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:13–16, 20, *KJV*).

The term "Christian" has come to be used very loosely, and today it is applied quite generally to many who are not Jews or heathen. Among these nominal Christians there are very few who live true Christian lives, so the question, "What is Christian living?", is a very important one to those who desire to be in harmony with the Lord. Jesus himself said, "Not

every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21, *KJV*).

The Christian way of life is the best way of life possible! Jesus said He came so His followers "may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10, *NKJV*). God's way of living has great benefits for this life and offers "pleasures forevermore" in the next (1 Timothy 4:8; Psalm 16:11, *NKJV*).

That does not mean that Christian living is easy. The challenges and difficulties of this way of life are designed to help us grow to have Jesus Christ's mind and the character of God. We are to learn to think and act like God, because He wants us to be His children forever.

Christian life seems difficult sometimes, doesn't it? God asks us to leave behind our selfishness and devote ourselves to Jesus Christ in the service of others. This journey has a clear beginning and an even clearer end, but its path is littered with dangerous obstructions and uncertain curves. Thankfully, its destination provides lasting, eternal rewards.

Chances are you have experienced the difficulty of losing your way on the journey. We have all been tempted to stray, to step away from the fundamentals of true Christian living toward the more immediate fulfillment we desire for ourselves. But God calls us to a life devoted to studying the Scriptures, to prayer, and most importantly, to knowing Christ Himself.

The number of true Christians on the earth during this age has been very small, and while these have exercised a wholesome influence upon mankind within their limited sphere—and the world has thus been blessed by their presence—the next age will be the time when this statement will have its greatest fulfillment. Then, in association with Christ, the church will preserve and give everlasting life to all who obey the laws of that new Kingdom.

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me (Philippians 1:27–30, *KJV*).

Christian living means the regulating of one's conduct according to the Gospel of Christ. The word "conversation" used here includes conduct, and not merely our words. Our words are, of course, a very true index of our hearts and lives. The Christian who loves to talk about the Gospel of Christ more than any other theme is quite likely to be ordering his whole life in keeping with the Gospel, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

All Christians who truly appreciate the spirit and power of the true Gospel will want to labor together in its defense and belief. They will not allow unimportant and personal differences to occupy a position of greater importance in their lives than the Gospel. Because of these differences, we keep ourselves away from the brethren that would be contrary to the true spirit of Christianity. The Gospel of Christ, the Truth, is very important, and those who love it will stand together in its defense, and will permit its influence to weld them together into a blessed unity in Christ.

Christian Living Principles

God gave us the Bible to teach us the best way to live and to give us examples of others to learn from. The good and bad examples in the Bible can make what may seem to be abstract principles come to life.

The points below will help you find and understand the biblical principles for dealing with the challenges of life. They will help you build strong, supportive, loving relationships. They will help you grow in the knowledge of God's way and in acting on that knowledge.

God's way is the way of love. It is the way of peace. Biblical principles will help us in decision-making, in controlling our emotions and in growing in spiritual maturity. By practicing Christian living, we will demonstrate the values that Christ has and the love He shows.

Living the Christian life is not just abiding by an agenda or following a set of strict rules. Instead, the Christian life is characterized by:

- Understanding that you are a new creation! "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17, *NKJV*).
- Transforming and renewing your mind. "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2, *KJV*).

- Treating others with love. "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others (Philippians 2:3–4, *NKJV*).
- Living the teachings of Christ. Jesus taught: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3–10, *KJV*).
- Sharing your faith by example. "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lamp-stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14–16, *NKJV*).

Living the Christian life does not mean enjoying a life of ease and never experiencing problems. In 1 Peter 5:8, it says that there is an enemy who wishes to destroy us: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (*KJV*). But we also read that Jesus has overcome the world!

No matter what opposition you face, living the Christian life is worth it! Enjoying a relationship with God and His Son Jesus, being confident of where you will spend eternity, and living in day-to-day fellowship with Him is far greater than any opposition you may face.

Your brother in Christ,



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