

May 2024

Dear Brethren:

Greetings to you all in the household of God. I would like to write about our lives as Christian—Church of God—members.

We are called by God, our Father; and God loves us as His children. In this call, there is a way that God intends for us to live our lives that pleases Him. How should we live in this perverse world?

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

By the time our lights shine, we should also be bearing fruits. We are not to be barren, and fruits must be seen by others and God, too.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples (John 15:8).

In all this, our conversation is to be honest.

Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Peter 2:12).

Our walk should be different from that of the rest of the world.

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness . . . And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:17–19, 24).

After putting off the old man, we are to put on the new man that is created Christlike.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Let each of us ask himself: What do people see in me? Do they see Christ?

He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known (Proverbs 10:9).

For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps (1 Peter 2:21).

We are to abstain from evil.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation (1 Peter 2:11–12).

We are to stand for the right thing, come what may.

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself (Daniel 1:8).

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up (Daniel 3:16–18).

We must live a loyal life.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips (Job 2:9–10).

King David once asked God:

Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour (Psalm 15:1–3).

Do we want to dwell in God's tabernacle; do we want to walk with God? We must agree with God. Enoch walked with God because he agreed with all that God wanted him to do. We, too, as God's people must walk with God.

And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him (Genesis 5:21–24).

God told Abraham to walk blameless before Him.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect (Genesis 17:1).

We, too, have to be blameless. As the prophet Micah said, a Christian life needs to be a humble life.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Micah 6:8)

Our new life is in Christ. It is a new life different from the past life.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

We are to be walking in the Spirit.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit [according to our calling], and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).

That ye might walk worthy of the LORD unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:10).

Christ said to the Church:

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy (Revelation 3:4).

In our former lives, we were walking in darkness, and then God called us to His marvelous Light. We are not to go back into darkness, but walk humbly in the Lord.

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined (Isaiah 9:2).

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Ephesians 2:2).

David wrote:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful (Psalm 1:1).

John the Baptist told the Jews that they should not go mouthing that they are Abraham's descendants, but instead should:

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham (Matthew 3:8–9).

The Christian way of life is shown by fruits in our lives, not by how much we know the Bible chapters, nor by how many years we have been in the Church.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:16–20).

We have been bought with a price, a price that was paid by the life of someone else.

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's [we are called by God's name] (1 Corinthians 6:20).

We are the children of the Light because our Father is Light. We are to be serious with our calling. It is life and death. We *must* overcome the world.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:4–5)

The Apostle John on the Isle of Patmos, by the power of God, wrote to the churches in Asia Minor that they had to overcome.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. . . . He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. . . . He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone

a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. . . . And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 12:11).

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels (Revelation 3:5).

And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Revelation 12:11).

The Church is to overcome the world, not vice versa.

The lesson that John gave to the seven churches is not just an admonition, but is an actual *requirement* that we must overcome our carnal natures as a daily way of life. Consider the parable of the pounds. There was one who was given his pound and failed to multiply it; the pound was taken from him.

And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds (Luke 19:22–24).

Many church members are fearful to step out in faith to obey. The wicked who refuse to repent from sin, as well as those too lazy to put their foot forward, will not be in the Kingdom of God. We have been hearers of the Word, but are we doers of the Word that we hear?

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 (James 1:23–24).

If it is this way with us, then we deceive ourselves. Many are addicted to something, and it is time now to cut the cord. That *something* will keep you out of the Kingdom of God.

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:9–10).

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).

Christ said that one cannot live by bread alone (Matthew 4:4). Our lives should be led by the Word of God. That should be our *first food*. Moses also told the Israelites:

And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live (Deuteronomy 8:3).

The Word of God is to be our compass, directing us where we are to go spiritually, because we live in Christ. We live in the Spirit:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring (Acts 17:28).

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

Christians are to lay aside everything that does not reflect God's will. We are not to be Christians only during the time that we are attending church service. We are to set an example as Church of God members in this dark world. We are not to be just talking with our mouths that we are Christian. As the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words."

But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good,

obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things (Titus 2:1–10).

They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate (Titus 1:16).

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Saducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance (Matthew 3:7–8).

Christ told the woman who was caught sinning that she should sin no more:

And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more [We, too, should strive to sin no more.] (John 8:9–11).

Let us check ourselves. Do I see myself walking as a Christian? Will I be in the first resurrection when the last trumpet sounds? Will I meet the Lord in the air and will I rule with Him in His Kingdom? Will I be able to say what the Apostle Paul said:

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 (2 Timothy 4:7–8).



Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. 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 (1 Corinthians 9:24–27).

Remember what Mr. Armstrong taught us: *Christianity Is a Way of Life!*

Lastly, we are to imitate Christ, as the Apostle Paul said:

Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled (2 Corinthians 10:3–6).

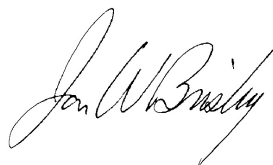
May the living God, our Father, help us to live true Christian lives. Ask yourself: Do I know where I have come from, and do I know where I am going?

May God be with you all.

Your brother in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isaya Owak', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Isaya Owak

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon W. Brisby', written in a cursive style.

Jon W. Brisby