

Begin the Christian Life Right

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For one to begin the Christian life right means having a right commitment in our heart to God, which is acting, deciding, responding, and treating people the way Jesus treated people. It is a reading of the Bible every day because what foods are for our physical life, the Bible is for our spiritual life. If we “Desire the pure milk of the Word,” then we must begin right, and spiritual growth will be seen.

Beginning the Christian life right, means desiring to meet along with other believers at Church services (Heb.10:25) “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” because it is God’s will, and it is the example we need to set for children and teenagers.

The devil wants us to make excuses, but there is no excuse for not making a sincere effort to attend services; use the opportunity to hear a message of Truth; to sing praises to God, and to pray with others. At first, everyone is a spiritual infant with a carnal mind, but we need not remain as spiritual infants.

If we truly accept Christ into our heart, we will be submissive to God’s Word and be humble in everything and will want no recognition nor accept credit for anything. (Gal.2:20) “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Beginning the *Christian Walk* right, means to place every situation we meet with into God’s hands every day. There is very much spiritual growth to be made, so any opportunity to meet something scripturally

should be viewed as a learning opportunity. When God reveals any attitude that is not according to His Will and Word, it must be confessed and repented of right away.

After making the commitment to do God’s will in everything that crosses our path, circumstances may arise to test our commitment, and which can advance spiritual growth, if they are met according to the Scriptures.

If we have the mind of Jesus, we will not worry about anything that happens but will place all things in God’s hands for His control. We should not be sensitive about things, nor be upset when we are offended. (1 Peter 2:23) “When He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

Being in the center of God’s will, brings to us a peace and contentment that cannot be enjoyed any other way. Anything we obtain outside of the will of God, will not bring contentment nor a lasting peace. The devil tries to convince us that we would be happier to follow our own plans, but to follow the world’s ways with anything will hinder spiritual progress, and we will have to make a new beginning.

Not everyone who looks religious or talks religion, will enter Heaven, but **“he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”** (Matt.7:21). Those who *do the will* of the Father, confess their sins, confess any wrong attitudes, or unscriptural decisions, and they will want to re-commit their life to God.

Whatever thing that defiles our conscience, needs to be confessed to God and corrected. If we do not make a final decision to give up wrong ways or activities, Satan will quickly get us back into wrong habits. We must even be careful of our thoughts because thoughts can become our words; words become actions; and actions can become habits.

We may have said, “I’ve been thinking about something,” which could become our thoughts turned into words. If there is no change in our thinking, it can soon become an action of ours and can then easily be turned into a habit. If the devil has us thinking of not staying strong in our commitment (and

suggesting this or that excuse for not doing so), those thoughts can become words and actions; and then later become a habit with us.

If that happens, it will reveal our lack of commitment to do God's will, which would include our assembling together; singing hymns; praying as one in Christ; and, listening to a message of Truth from God's Word. When we decide to do the will of God with anything, His Spirit will enable us to carry through with that right intention.

If we begin the Christian life right, we will soon see spiritual growth, which is meeting difficult things and people in a scriptural way. It is important that we correctly define the term, Christian. That word 'Christian' only appears a few times in the Bible. (Acts 11: 26) "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 26:28) "Agrippa said to Paul, 'You almost persuade me to become a Christian.'" And (1 Peter 4:16) "If any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed."

To be a Christian in the first century meant the narrow gate; a straight road; and following Jesus at the risk of their life. We would like to think that there are many who are truly following Jesus, (but only God really knows the heart). It is not for us to judge, but we should judge ourselves and to be sure that we have begun the Christian race right by committing our life to God right.

True Christianity has become so distorted by the devil, that millions of people do not know the difference between a true inward Christian life, and just an outward profession of faith. To begin the Christian life in a correct way is what Jesus said to Nicodemus. (John 3:3) "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Jesus explained to him about the need for a Spiritual birth, so he could begin trusting God in faith. It is to be a change in our attitude, a change in how we talk; and how we treat others. Also, our conversations; our decisions; and our responses to things that are said and done toward us. It is to become a complete conversion of our heart attitude toward everything and everyone.

We are born as 'children of Adam', so we begin as 'children of anger, resentment, sin, and self's control. (Ephes.2:1-2) "In the past you

were spiritually dead because of your disobedience and sins. At that time, you followed the world's evil way; you obeyed the ruler of the spiritual powers in space [the devil], the spirit who now controls the people who disobey God."

Self-discipline or self-determination cannot change a rebellious heart. We need to receive a new nature via a 'new-birth'— which is received only from God through His Spirit. The Holy Spirit causes the Word of God to produce faith in God in our heart. To be born is the beginning *of life*. To be reborn is the beginning of spiritual life.

In Christ, we receive a new nature; new desires; new goals, and everything that we say, do, and decide should begin to give evidence of that change in us. (1 Cor.10:31) "Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." As we accept the divine nature, we should reflect a likeness of Christ in our way of talking and responding to others and situations. Jesus died on the cross so that we could be free from unscriptural habits and a desire for worldly interests and pastimes.

We need to consider ourselves free from being bound by past habits and desires for worldly and sinful things. (Romans 6:11) "Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." Being alive to Christ-like ways and attitudes are things that we must strive to maintain in our life. If we have unpaid debts, we need to make efforts to pay them in full; if we insulted someone we should (and need to) apologize. If we do not know of any debt or insult, then we need to see ourselves forgiven (and keep the past in the past).

We can always begin over again, by re-committing our life again to God's will and His Word. The Christian life is a life of spiritual growth and a continual learning (learning to treat family members, friends, loved ones, and others much differently and Scripturally in a Christlike way. Our words to them, and our treatment of them, need to become kind and considerate (not critical, insensitive, and uncaring).

Jesus did not demand that people agree with Him, and He said nothing when they insulted Him. He said, His true family members, were those who 'do the will of God',

(and saying) **“the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”** (Mark 3:35)

Everyone must make a choice, but not many make the choice to follow New Testament teaching. When asked (Luke 13:23), *“Lord, are there few that be saved?”* Jesus replied, **“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”**

Jesus then added (Luke 13:25) **“When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from.’”**

This new birth, a conversion of heart, and a change of attitude are revealed by God to us in many ways. God will take away the tendency to gossip (take it out of our heart); we will not want to criticize other people, nor to say sarcastic things and disparaging remarks about fellow Christians, but instead, will say things that build up — not tear down. We will want to encourage fellow members of the faith, and to assure them of our prayers. People will want to be around us and to fellowship with us.

We need to be careful of our thoughts because they soon become words, which will turn into actions, and then form into characteristic habits. What should be our habit is written for us (Phil.4:8) “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of ‘good report’” we are to “think on these things;” and to see and recognize the good side, and virtuous things in the character of others around us.

To talk about them in negative ways, would become slanderous of someone, and usually be misrepresenting their true intentions. We should want to give a good report about others around us, (or best to say nothing at all). We should be concerned about the wrong things someone may be doing (and be praying for God to show them the wrong things in their life), while we want to think about the *right* things they are doing, or have done, things that are true, just, and caring on behalf of others. It may have been often said (but too *seldom* followed), that if we can’t say anything good

about someone, then best to say nothing at all, (and to always refrain from making comparisons between people.)

Bible Scriptures teach us of the need to love one another, not to criticize each other. We are commanded to show divine love toward other people by being kind, considerate, and to compliment them when there is reason to complement them. It is just doing toward them what we would want them to do for us. We should (and need to) ask God to remove all slanderous thoughts from our mind, and slander from our tongue, and replace it with a compassionate mind and tongue.

(James 3:5-18) “In the same way the tongue is an insignificant part of the body, but it is immensely boastful. Remember how a mere spark may set a vast forest in flames. And the tongue is a fire. That world of iniquity, the tongue, is placed within us spotting and soiling our whole nature, and, setting the whole round of our lives on fire, being itself set on fire by Gehenna. For brute nature under all its forms—beasts and birds, reptiles, and fishes, — can be subjected and kept in subjection by human nature. But the tongue no man or woman is able to tame. It is an ever-busy mischief and is full of deadly poison.” (We need God to control our tongue, for) (vs.9-18) “With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in God’s likeness. Out of the same mouth there proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, this ought not to be. In a fountain, are fresh water and bitter sent forth from the same opening? Can a fig-tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine yield figs? No; and neither can saltwater yield sweet. Which of you is a wise and well-instructed man? Let him prove it by a right life with conduct guided by a wisely teachable spirit. But if in your hearts you have bitter feelings of envy and rivalry, do not speak boastfully and falsely, in defiance of the truth.” (for) “That is not the wisdom which comes down from above: it belongs to earth, to the unspiritual nature, and to evil spirits. For where envy and rivalry are, there also are unrest and every vile deed. The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceful, courteous, not self-willed, (but) full of compassion and kind actions, free from

favoritism and from all insincerity. And peace, for those who strive for peace, is the seed of which the harvest is righteousness."

God has proven to be a faithful Father, so it is our Christian duty to become as, 'always trusting children'. We need to allow God to work in our heart, and to accept what He has promised to give, that is a new attitude of kindness, compassion, and being considerate of others.

(Phil.2:5) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,"— should remind us to be careful how we think; since our thoughts can become words which can turn into actions, and then later become character habits— which can affect our receiving eternal life.

(Matt. 5:44-45) "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." That will be, to 'begin the Christian life right!'

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The First Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia

Some main points of:

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