

Christian Living— The Beginning of the Christian Life

Part 2

S067 26 0823P

Christian living begins when we decide to commit our life to God—that every Choice we make, every decision we make, and every attitude we take, will be within the parameters or guidelines of God’s will and God’s Word, the Bible—God has *promised* to help us do that—we just make the decision. Christian living is acting and treating people in a Christ-like way. NLT Matthew 7:12 *“Do for others what you would like them to do for you.”*

Christian living means reading the Bible daily, because what *food* is to our *physical* life, the *Bible* is to our *spiritual* life. If we NKJV 1 Peter 2:2 *“Desire the pure milk of the word,”* then we have begun right and spiritual growth will be seen.

Christian living means meeting with other believers at church—AV Hebrews 10:25 *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,”* because it is God’s will for us to do that, and it is the example we should set for our children and every other young person. The devil always has an excuse for us to use, but there is no excuse for not making the effort to attend church; to hear a true message on Christian living; to praise God; and to pray as one.

We are all spiritual infants with a carnal mind at first, but we do not have to remain infants. If Christ is accepted in our heart, we will be submissive to God, and humble in spirit—wanting no recognition and accepting no credit for anything. AV Galatians 2:20 *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*

Christian living begins when we decide to place every situation we encounter that day into God’s hands. There is spiritual growth to be made, so any opportunity to meet something scripturally should be viewed as a learning opportunity. When any attitude in us is shown by

God to be an unscriptural attitude, it must be confessed and repented of right then and there.

After deciding that Christian living is what we desire, circumstances will arise that will test our commitment. These situations can advance spiritual growth—if they are met according to the Scriptures—or they can move us backward—if *not* met scripturally.

Having the mind of Jesus, means not worrying about things that happen—but it means placing every situation in God’s hands for divine control. We should not be sensitive about things, nor be upset when offended. NKJV 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 peace and contentment that cannot be enjoyed any other way. Anything we obtain outside the will of God, brings no lasting peace. The devil tries to tell us that we would be happier following the world’s way—but doing that hinders spiritual progress.

Not everyone who *looks* religious or *talks* religion will enter Heaven, but AV Matthew 7:21 *“he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”* Those who *do the will* of the Father, *confess* their sins; *repent* of wrong attitudes; and *decide* that their choices will be according to God’s Word.

Anything that defiles our conscience must be confessed and corrected. If we do not make a decisive or definite decision to give up wrong ways and activities, Satan can quickly get us back into those wrong habits and behaviors. We must be careful of our thoughts, because thoughts become our words; words become actions; and actions become habits.

We may have said: *I’ve been thinking about*—which are thoughts turned into words, that can soon become actions, and then a habit. For instance: if we make an excuse to not attend a church service, our *thoughts* have become *actions*—that can easily become a *habit*.

If this happens, it shows a lack of commitment to do the will of God—which is attending church; assembling together; singing hymns; praying as one; and listening to a message of Truth from the Word of God. When we decide to confess and forsake our sins and surrender our life to *do* the will of God, His Holy Spirit enables us to carry through.

When Christian living begins, spiritual growth is seen—we will notice that we are meeting tough things and difficult people in a scriptural way. The definition of *Christian* is a Christ-follower. AV Acts 11:26 *“The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”* NKJV Acts 26:28 *“Agrippa said to Paul, ‘You almost persuade me to become a Christian.’”*

Christian living in the first century meant the *narrow* gate; a *straight* road; and *following* Jesus even at the risk of their life. We want to think that there are many who follow Jesus by putting real faith in His Atonement sacrifice for them, but only God really knows the heart. It is not for us to judge, but we should judge *ourselves* and be sure that we have begun the Christian race right, by committing our life to God right.

Christianity has become so distorted by the devil, that millions of professing Christians do not know the difference between the true *inward* Christian life, and just an *outward* profession of faith. Correctly beginning the Christian life of faith is what Jesus said to Nicodemus. AV John 3:3 *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

Jesus explained the need for a true Spiritual *rebirth*—so the man could begin trusting God in real faith. It is a *change*; a *conversion*; and a *transformation* of our attitude—how we talk; how we treat others; our conversations; our decisions, and our responses to things that are said or done to us. It is a complete conversion of our heart *attitude* toward everything and everyone.

Our first birth makes us *children of Adam*—we begin as *children of anger, resentment, sin, unforgiveness, and self* in control. NLT Ephesians 2:2 *“You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the—prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.”*

No self-discipline and no self-determination can change a rebellious heart. Self-discipline, which is an idea promoted by the world, means the ability to make ourselves do things that we know we should do even when we do not want to. However, we know that we cannot do those things in our own strength or with our own ability. God is the One who gives us the strength, wisdom, and ability to do what God wants us to do. Isaiah 41:10, *“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God:*

I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

Philippians 4:13, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*

Self-determination is the idea that refers to the ability of individuals or groups to make choices and govern themselves without external influence. We know that we do have the power of choice, but we must remember that if we desire to spend eternity with God on high, we must choose to make Godly choices and allow God to control and direct our every decision.

Proverbs 3:5-6, *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*

Isaiah 55:8-9, *“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”*

We must receive a *new nature* by a *new birth*—which is *only* from God through His Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit Who causes the *Word of God* to produce *Faith in God* in our heart. To be *born* is the beginning of *life*, and to be *reborn* is the beginning of *spiritual life*—when true Christian living begins.

We *now* have a *new nature*; *new* desires; *new* goals; *new* way of responding to everyone. Everything we say, do, and decide should give evidence of that change in us. NKJV 1 Corinthians 10:31 *“Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* As we accept the divine nature by faith, we should reflect a likeness of Christ in our life—our speech and responses are different. The Blood of the cross was shed so we could be free from wrong interests—interests, ideas, and attitudes that serve no good purpose.

We are *free* from the hold of past habits. NIV Romans 6:11 *“Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”* Being alive to Christ-like ways and attitudes, must be maintained by a choice of the will. If we have back debts, we should begin paying on them; if we insulted someone, we should apologize to them—if we do not know of any debt or insult, we must believe we are forgiven.

True Christian living begins, by truly committing our life to God—and re-committing our life to Him, if needed. Christian living is a life of spiritual growth and continual learning—

learning to treat our family, our friends, and our loved ones in a different and scriptural way. Our words *to* them, and our treatment *of* them, should be *kind* and *considerate*—not *critical* and *uncaring*.

Jesus did not *demand* that people follow Him, and He said nothing when they *insulted* Him. His *real* family are those who *really* follow Him. He told the young man AV Mark 10:21 to *sell; give to the poor; transfer the money to Heaven: “and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”* That would be the Father’s will, He meant—and those who AV Mark 3:35 *“do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.”*

Everyone has a choice, (that power of choice) but not many make the right choice to follow New Testament teaching. When asked AV Luke 13:23, *“Lord, are there few that be saved?”* Jesus replied 24 *“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 added NKJV 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 and this change of attitude, is quickly seen—it will take the tendency to gossip out of our heart; we will not want to criticize people; nor to say derogatory, uncomplimentary, or insulting things about fellow believers. Christian living begins when we start saying things that build—not tear down. We will encourage fellow members and assure them of our prayers.

Be careful of *thoughts*; they soon become *actions* and quickly form *habits*. AV Philippians 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 speak about good things of others.

To *slander* someone is to *defame* someone’s character. We should *want* to give a *good* report about others—or say nothing at all. Instead of thinking about the *wrong* things someone may be doing, we are to think about the *right* things they are doing—things that are *true, just, and noble*. It has *often* been said, but too *seldom* followed—*If we can’t say anything good, then say nothing at all.*

We are to *love one another*, not *criticize each other*. We are commanded to show divine love to others by being kind and considerate of their feelings. It is just doing *for* them what we would want them to do *for* us. God can *remove* slander from us and *replace* it with compassion in us.

God is a *faithful* Father—now it is our duty to be *trusting* children. We must allow God to work in our heart, and to accept by faith what He has promised to give—a *new* attitude of *kindness, compassion, and thoughtfulness*.

AV Philippians 2:5 *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”*—reminds us to be careful how we *think*; as thoughts become *words*, which turn into *actions* and later become *habits*—habits that can *affect* our life and our eternal destiny.

NKJV Matthew 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.”* Christian living begins right there!



*Receive free Tracts email:
fcgchurch1@gmail.com

Or write to: PO Box 143
Cheltenham, PA 19012

#S067 26 0823P