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**"Christian Living"**

**"*And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch*."** -- Acts 11:26.

**CHRISTIANS**
You can be a part of the church that Christ died for, only if you do what the Bible says to be saved. Whether one is a Christian or not depends on whether one has done what God has instructed. Not everyone who calls themselves "Christians" are truly following His instructions (I John 2:3-6). The Bible indicates that a true Christian is one who is a follower of Christ in all things. Those who attempt less are not truly God's children (I John 3:10).

Other terms that the New Testament uses for Christians include:

disciples (Acts 11:26)

brethren (Col. 1:2, James 1:2)

children of God (I John 3:1)

members of the body (the church) (I Cor. 12:12, Eph.1:22-23)

saints (Acts 26:10, Rom. 1:7)

priests (Rev. 1:6, I Pet. 2:9)

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God" (I Pet. 2:9-10).

Please consider some of the ways Christians are to be different from other people in the world. The "people of God" are to live in the world but to keep unspotted from the world (James 1:27, Rom. 12:2, I Tim. 5:22).
"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13).

**RIGHTEOUSNESS**
"For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).
Christ expects His followers to be righteous (Matt. 5:6, 10). Righteousness means living rightly. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3). To be righteous before God requires that we obey ALL of His commands (Luke 1:6).
Anything else is self-righteousness.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11-12). "All unrighteousness is sin" (I John 5:17).

**STUDY**
We must study God's Word so that we may know His will (II Tim. 2:15, Acts 17:11). We also must study to be ready to tell others about the gospel (I Pet. 3:15, Rom. 1:16).
We must have a love of the truth (II Thess. 2:10).
It is only through study and a devotion to God's Word that we can increase in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:9-10, Rom. 15:14). Not everyone will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of God (Matt. 7:21). We must study the Bible so that we may know His will and do what He expects of us.

**FAITHFULNESS**
God demands an active faith (James 2:14-19, 22; 1:22). "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).
We must not let our past sinful lives interfere with our present commitment (Phil. 3:13).
God expects Christians to be obedient in everything He commands (II Cor. 2:9). God gave "commandments," not "suggestions." The Christian is expected to be faithful in church attendance (Heb. 10:25). We are told to never stop praying (I Thess. 5:17). "And you ... now He has reconciled ... to present you holy, and blameless, and irreproachable in His sight -- if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard" (Col. 1:21-23). It is possible to fall away from God (Heb. 3:12, I Cor. 10:12, Gal. 5:4, Matt. 13:21). We must be "faithful until death to receive the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10, II Tim. 4:7).
If we fall from grace, we must "repent and return to righteousness" (Rev. 2:5, Rom. 11:17-24, I John 1:9).

**LOVE**
The greatest commandment is: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Mat. 22:37, I Jn 4:19).
All God's commandments are summed up in this saying: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Rom. 13:8-10, Gal. 5:14, Matt. 22:39, Col. 3:14).
We are expected to love even those who hate us (Matt. 5:43-47, Rom. 12:14). "Strive for peace with all men" (Heb. 12:14, Rom. 12:18).
Jesus said, "All men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).
Christians are to do good to all, but especially to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ (Gal. 6:10, Rom. 12:10).
Love will cover a multitude of sins and permit us to be forgiving of one another (I Pet. 4:8, Col. 3:13). Let all that you do be done with love (I Cor. 16:14).

Husbands and wives are to love one another. Parents are to love their children.
God prefers that Christians marry Christians (II Cor. 6:14, I Cor. 7:12-16).
God demands that we be faithful to one mate (Matt. 5:31-32). Divorce is not acceptable (Rom. 7:2-3). He does not tolerate sexual immorality (adultery) (I Cor. 6:13, 18). Even lust is condemned (Matt. 5:27-28).
Homosexuality is shameful in God's eyes (Rom. 1:26-27, Lev. 18:22). For such sin were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed (Gen. 19:4-9).

Christians are not to love worldly things (I John 2:15-17).
We are not to love wealth, but are to be content with what we have (Heb. 13:5, I Tim. 6:8-10, I Cor. 4:11, Phil. 4:11, II Cor. 9:8). Love God and He will provide (Matt. 6:33).

**SERVICE**
Our love for others must be in deed and in truth (I John 3:18, I Cor. 13). "Through love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13, Matt. 20:26-27). Christians are to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).
We must also be servants of God (I Pet. 2:16, Rom. 6:16).
One way we serve God is to present our bodies as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1, Eph. 5:2). All that we do should be to the glory of God (I Cor. 10:31).
Jesus Christ came to serve (Matt. 20:28). He taught us by His example.

**EXAMPLE**
Since Christ left us His example, Christians must follow in His steps (I Pet. 2:21, Matt. 16:24). When we consider whether something is right or wrong, we should ask ourselves: What would Jesus do in this situation? Where would He go? How would He behave? (etc.)
Also, we should follow the examples set by more mature Christians (II Thess. 3:7, 9; I Thess. 1:6, I Cor. 4:16, Phil. 3:17, Heb. 6:12).

All Christians are expected to set an example for other Christians in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity (I Tim. 4:12, I Thess. 1:7).

We must avoid doing things that would cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble (Rom. 14:13-21, I Cor. 8:7-13).

A Christian, as described in the New Testament, does not act differently when in different company.
As ambassadors for Christ we must also live honorably before the world (II Cor. 5:20, 8:21). Christians must be examples for the sinful and shine as lights in a world of darkness (Phil. 2:15, Eph. 5:8).
"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:14-16).
We must remember that we have been instructed to obey the civil laws (Rom. 13:1-7, Matt. 22:21).

Children are going to make up their minds about Jesus based on what they see at home. We must be examples that our children should imitate.
It is the Christian home where the world can really see a difference in life. From observing our family life, men and women are going to see the real meaning of Christian conversion. From what they see of how you live as a Christian, they are going to become more interested, or less interested, in this One you call the Christ.

**SELF-CONTROL**
"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23). The most difficult, but most important, thing to control is the tongue (James 3:2-12). One's religion is useless if one's speech is not under control (James 1:26).
God has always expected His followers to be honest (truthful) about all things (Ex. 20:16, Prov. 12:17-22, Matt. 5:33-37, Eph. 4:25).

Gossip and abusive, insulting language are not to come from Christians (Matt. 5:22, I Tim. 5:13, Titus 3:2, James 4:11).
Our speech is to be sound and good (Eph. 4:29, Titus 2:8).
Using God's name in any form in vulgarity is clearly forbidden by God's word (Ex. 20:7). A Christian's speech is to be free of profanity and filthy language (Col. 3:8).

The Christian is expected to take care of his (or her) body because it is the "temple of God" (I Cor. 3:16-17). With this in mind, as Christians mature they usually understand that it is best to refrain from tobacco, alcohol, over-eating, and other things that may be unhealthful (Eph. 5:18, Rom. 14:21). "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:22, Rom. 12:9). Such things as gambling, pornography, and lewd dancing are, therefore, best avoided by Christians.
"Bad company ruins good morals" (I Cor. 15:33).

**CONCLUSIONS**
Christians must examine themselves regularly to see whether they are living as Christians (II Cor. 13:5, I Cor. 9:27).
Whatever our task, we should work heartily (Col. 3:23). Do not forget: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). "Put on the whole armor of God" and be prepared to fight "the good fight" (Eph. 6:10-17, II Tim. 4:7).
In spite of God's help, many will suffer as Christians (I Pet. 4:16, Acts 14:22, II Tim. 3:12). We must learn to rejoice even in our tribulations (Acts 5:41, Rom. 5:3-5).

The Bible describes a Christian as one who is a *new creation*, having put to death the former sinful self (II Cor. 5:17, Gal. 2:20, Rom. 6:6). Because of our love for and responsibility to God, we strive to follow the New Testament pattern for Christian living.
However, because we all sin, we never reach the perfection for which we strive (Rom. 3:23, I John 1:8). If we will follow in Jesus' steps, His blood will continue to cleanse us of sins (I John 1:7, II Cor. 5:7).
Nevertheless, we are not saved because of any of these works of righteousness of ours, but through the grace of God (Acts 15:11, Tit. 3:5).
Let us please God and "walk worthy of the Lord" (Col. 1:10).

Let us be Christians that are known for our righteousness, study, faithfulness, love, service, example, and self-control.

"Have no anxiety about anything" (Phil. 4:6).
Only as Christians who are striving to serve and please God according to His will can we know and feel "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Phil. 4:7).