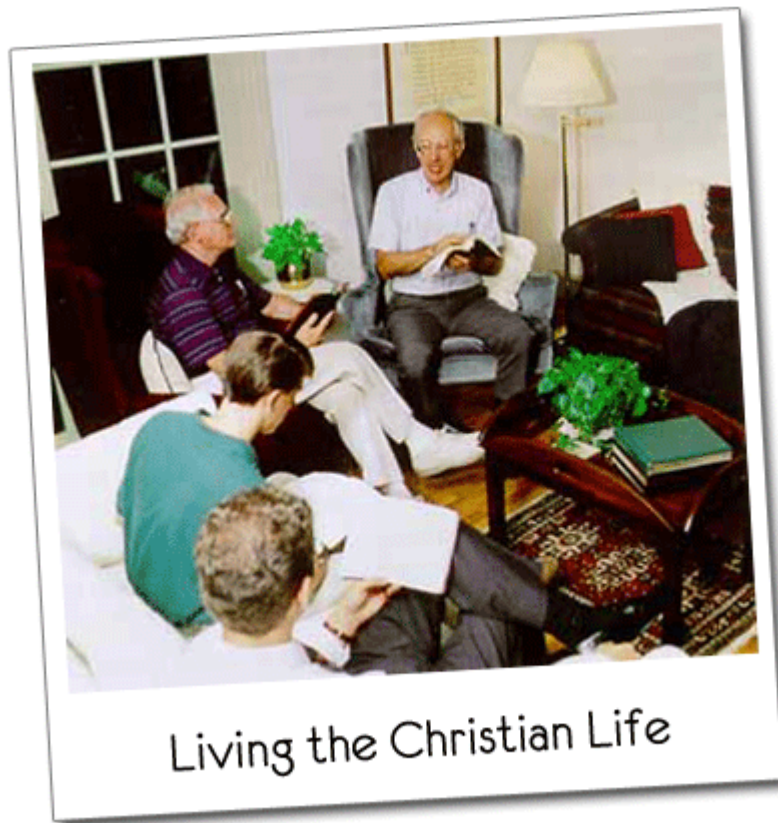


Living the Christian Life



Those who have just received Christ are like newborn babes (I Peter 2:2). They have been “born again” (John 3:3,7) into the family of God. And just as babies need to grow and develop, so do Christians. Here are a few simple, basic guidelines for your development in the Christian life.

Baptism

Baptism is both a confession of faith and the sign and seal of the covenant of grace into which the Lord has brought us. As a sign, baptism pictures by an external act the internal washing of the soul by the blood of Christ. As a seal, it is a God-given token of assurance to a believer that he has been born again and savingly united to Christ. As such, baptism is the initial step of entrance into the visible church.

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:38,41).

Bible Reading

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:2).

The Word of God is the Christian’s food. It will make you strong in the faith. Start with John’s Gospel and read it carefully, chapter by chapter. Then do the same the whole way

through the New Testament. Try to remember at least one thing out of every chapter you read.

As you read the Bible keep a notebook and answer some basic questions from each chapter you read. For example:

- What does this chapter teach me about God?
- What does it teach me about Christ?
- What does it teach me about the Holy Spirit?
- What are the leading doctrines?
- What sins are recorded that I should avoid?
- What virtues are recorded that I should emulate?

Daily Prayer

“Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17).

“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Luke 18:1).

Prayer is the air a Christian breathes, yet many people have expressed difficulty in being able to pray. A simple structure for your prayer life may be based on an acrostic on the words ACTS:

A is for adoration

C is for confession

T is for thanksgiving

S is for supplication

These are four vital components of true prayer.

Connection Between Bible Reading and Prayer

Our reading and study of the Word is the foundation of our praying. Normally, therefore, Bible reading should precede prayer. Take time to get into the Word of God and let that lead you in your praying. The answers to the questions you have listed in your Bible reading will now be a great help in directing you how to approach God with praise, confession, and supplication.

Another way to gain help from the Bible in your daily prayer life is to read a psalm or other such portion of Scripture on your knees and praise God for everything it suggests to your mind. The beauty of this method is that it keeps your approach to God fresh. It also helps to create a spirit of praise and joy in the Lord. And, as Nehemiah said, “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Witnessing for Christ

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

Never be ashamed to own Christ as your Saviour. Be like the demoniac whom Jesus healed in Gadara, and start confessing Christ in your own home and neighbourhood as soon as you possibly can (Mark 5:19, 20).

Let your testimony as a Christian shine to all around you by your holy living and separation from the sins of the world.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men” (Philippians 4:5).

“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:13).

Church Membership

Become an active member in a Bible-believing church. This is the Lord’s command:

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25).

Especially do not neglect attendance at the Lord’s Table:

“The Lord Jesus ... said, ... this do in remembrance of me” (I Corinthians 11:23,24).

It is important to make sure you get into fellowship in a church that remains faithful to the Word of God.

Most major denominations have departed from the Word of God (II Peter 2:1). They have embraced “another gospel” (Galatians 1:6,7). They are involved in the ecumenical movement (the World Council of Churches), which is seeking to create one united church on earth, including the Roman Catholic church, contrary to the plain commands of Scripture. In many churches this ecumenical thrust is being fueled by a counterfeit of the charismatic gifts of the early church.

These are serious dangers for a new believer to avoid. God’s Word commands us to keep ourselves separate from such movements:

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers” (II Corinthians 6:14).

“Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

Look for a church where the Lord Jesus Christ is constantly uplifted. Once you are in such a church, do not be content with being an onlooker. Get fully involved in the work of God in the church where He has placed you.

The Fulness of the Spirit

Seek a daily infilling of the Holy Spirit’s power.

“Be [continually] filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

God’s work can only be done by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit: “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

Every Christian has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him (Romans 8:9), and every Christian should have the Holy Spirit to fill him with His power to serve God.

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8).

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13).

Living by Faith

We may sum up how to live the Christian life very simply. Let Christ and His glory be your basic aim in life. Remember that you are to live by faith. That is, let what you believe determine how you act.

“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” (Galatians 2:20).

