

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“FULLY FOCUSED ON CHRIST”

Introduction:

- What was Martha's problem in Luke 10:38-42?
- All of Martha's busyness and activity caused her to lose **focus** on what was really important - Jesus Himself!
- Instead of being focused on what I **do** for Jesus, Jesus simply wants me to be focused **on Him!**
- The service you do for Jesus should be a natural outflow of your love and closeness to Christ.

Jesus, our example - fully focused on the Father.

- Jesus lived in **total** dependence upon His heavenly Father. John 14:8-10, 24, 8:28, 5:30
- Jesus' focus was not on what He could **do** for the Father, but rather, His focus was **on the Father** and what the Father could do **through** Him.

The Christian's life - fully focused on Christ.

- Jesus explained that our relationship with Him would mirror the relationship He enjoyed with the Father. Let's go back to John 14.
 - Verse 10 - I am in the Father and the Father in me.
 - Verse 16 - A prophecy of the **coming** of the Holy Spirit.

→ Verse 20 - Jesus said that we would experience His indwelling presence.

→ *“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.”*

Colossians 1:27

- Just as Jesus could do nothing that wasn't initiated through the life and power of the Father, Jesus said, *“...for without me ye can do **nothing**.”* John 15:5
- *“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.”* **Galatians 2:20**
- *“I can do all things **through Christ** which strengtheneth me.”* **Philippians 4:13**
- Just as Jesus lived His life through the power of the Father, you are to live your life through the power of **Christ**.

- The Christian life isn't about you focusing on what **you** can do for Christ.
- It is about Jesus living **through** you.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“THE CHRIST-LIFE”

GALATIANS 2:19-21

Introduction:

- Only one person can live the Christian life and that is **Christ**.
- You may be thinking, “That’s great, but where does that leave me?” Actually, it leaves you in wonderful shape.
- Our text, in Galatians 2:19-21, will explain why.
- From this text, we will derive three key statements:

First, God’s law cannot *help* you live the Christian life. vs. 19

- God’s law is found in the Old Testament and is a reflection of the righteousness of our God.
- According to verse 19, the law leaves us spiritually **dead**.
- The law was given to show us our **sinful** condition, so we will, in turn, flee to God’s remedy - Jesus Christ! Galatians 3:24
- God never meant for you to take the law and try to **live** your Christian life by it.

Second, you are *crucified* with Christ. vs. 20

- *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6*

- This means you can't live the Christian life by exercising **your** power and strength. Why? - Because a dead man has **no** life, power, or strength!

Third, the life of Christ now lives *in* you. vs. 20

- The **only** life you possess is the life of Christ within you. You have **no** life apart from Christ.
- Christ wants to live His life **through** you.
 - As you **depend** on Christ in every situation, He lives the Christian life through you.
- *“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” 2 Corinthians 4:10*

- You can't live the Christian life - you're **dead!** But, Christ can live it, and He lives **within** you.
- As you look in **faith** to Christ, He lives His victorious life through you.
- The Christian life is simply living the Christ-life.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
"THE LIABILITY OF ABILITY"
2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10

Introduction:

- According to 2 Corinthians 12:9, the question is not, "Are you strong enough to live the Christian life, but are you **weak** enough?"
- When you trust in your abilities instead of trusting in God, your abilities actually become liabilities.

How do we overcome the liability of ability?

First, God must bring us to the *end* of our abilities. vs. 1-8

- God will intentionally allow us to get into situations that are **greater** than our ability to solve.
- These times are designed to bring us to the end of our self-sufficiency and help us learn to **rest** in Christ and trust His grace and power.

Second, we must see the *all-sufficiency* of Christ's strength. vs. 8-9

- God wants to bring us to the point where we recognize how much we **need** Him. God doesn't want us to be consumed with our abilities, but consumed with Christ.
- Christ's strength is **all-sufficient**! 2 Corinthians 4:7, 3:5

- *“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” John 15:5*

Third, we view *trials* as opportunities to demonstrate Christ’s power. vs. 9-10

- How could Paul rejoice in problems? Because Paul had seen the power of Christ working through him and the eternal significance of it.
- These problems were a reminder to Paul of how much he ***needed*** Jesus.
- God loves you so much that He will use ***pain***, if necessary to bring you into a dependent relationship with Him.

- As you renounce self-sufficiency and rest in the all-sufficiency of Christ in you, you will witness God doing amazing things ***through*** you.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“OVERCOMING OUR SINS”

ROMANS 7:1-8:13

Introduction:

- When we have habitually struggled with a particular sin for years, it is difficult to imagine _____ being connected to that sin.
- As Christians, we truly desire victory, but many times we are confused as to how to gain that victory.
- Let's study God's Word and see how we can overcome our sins.

First, let's examine some misconceptions.

Misconception #1 - I need to focus more on God's law concerning my sin.

- The law *cannot* help you overcome your sin. 7:4-6

Misconception #2 - I need to have more determination and self-discipline.

- *Trying* harder didn't work for Paul, and it won't work for you. 7:18-19

Misconception #3 - I need to really focus my mind on overcoming this sin.

- God never intended for you to *dwell* on the sins of the flesh, even in an attempt to overcome them. 8:5-6

Second, we must understand the Christian's true identity.

- According to the Bible, when you trusted Christ as your Savior, you were placed **in Christ**. 8:1 What does this mean? Read 8:9-11, 15-16.
- Your complete identity has changed.
- The Spirit of Christ dwells in you and you are a child of the living God! Your identity is now characterized by **life** and righteousness. 8:10
- Who you were **before** you were in Christ is dead. 6:6, 7, 8; 7:4; 8:10
- Your sin does not reflect who you are. Paul made a distinction between his new identity in Christ and the **power** of sin dwelling in his fleshly body. 7:17, 20
- This power of sin is **in** you, but it is **not** you!

Third, victory is found in a **person** - Jesus Christ.

- In 7:24, Paul cries out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"
- God's provision for our sins is not a **plan** or program, but the person of Jesus Christ.
- As we rest in Christ and trust Him, Jesus will never **fail** to overcome the law of sin and death. 8:2

- Christians will never be free from the **presence** of sin as long as we are in this fleshly body, but as we trust Christ each moment, we find freedom from the **power** of sin.

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LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“THE PROBLEM OF THE FLESH”

- PART I

Introduction:

- Jesus told His disciples, “...*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” Matthew 26:41
- Jesus also said in John 6:63 that the spirit quickeneth, but the flesh profits nothing.
- In the Bible, the flesh is identified as being that part of you that is unregenerate and at enmity with God. In your flesh is said to dwell the **law** of sin.
- In this message, we will study God’s Word and discover the Christian’s relationship to the flesh, why we walk after the flesh, what happens when we walk after the flesh, and how we overcome the flesh.

The Christian’s *identity* is no longer associated with the flesh.

- In Romans 7:18, it is clear that the flesh is still **present**, but it no longer is the Christian’s identity.
- Colossians 2:11-13 explains why this is true.
 1. The law of sin in your flesh has now been **cut** off from your spirit (where God dwells.)
 2. You are no longer identified with that law of sin that once characterized you, but you are identified **eternally** in Christ.
 - “*And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*”
Galatians 5:24

The flesh cannot enslave the Christian unless the Christian *chooses* to follow the flesh.

- Before salvation, you were **dead** in sins, and the flesh enslaved you completely.
- Ephesians 2:1-3 reveals clearly the **bondage** that you were in. The law of sin and death reigned in your flesh.
- But at salvation, a **new** law was introduced - the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:2
 - This new law supersedes the **old** law of sin and death.
- But, the Christian can willingly choose to **follow** after the flesh and submit to that old law of sin and death. Romans 8:1, 4, 13; 6:13

- The flesh cannot enslave us. Only by our **choice** can the fleshly law of sin and death have any influence over us.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“THE PROBLEM OF THE FLESH”

- PART 2

Introduction:

- Jesus told His disciples, “...*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” Matthew 26:41
- Jesus also said in John 6:63 that the spirit quickeneth, but the flesh profits nothing.
- In the Bible, the flesh is identified as being that part of you that is unregenerate and at enmity with God. In your flesh is said to dwell the **law** of sin.
- In this message, we will study God’s Word and discover the consequences of when a Christian chooses to walk after the flesh.

The Christian’s *identity* is no longer associated with the flesh.

The flesh cannot enslave the Christian unless the Christian *chooses* to follow the flesh.

Walking in the flesh *always* brings dreadful consequences.

- While you do not **lose** your relationship with God, there are always consequences when you decide to follow the flesh, rather than abide in Christ and His Word.
 - **Romans 8:1** - this is not speaking of eternal condemnation, but rather a temporal condemnation of your **body** on this earth.
cf. 1 Corinthians 11:32-34

→ **Romans 8:6** - to dwell on the flesh and follow the flesh is **death**.

→ **Romans 8:13** - fleshly **choices** lead to death.

→ **Galatians 6:8** - sowing to the **flesh** reaps corruption.

- When a Christian walks after the flesh, frustration and misery will **always** result.

→ Why is this? Because you are walking in a way that is contrary to the holy, righteous **nature** that you have received in Christ.

- The flesh can bring temporary pleasure, but it cannot bring **contentment**.
- For the Christian, it is no longer your nature to live a lifestyle of **sin** and wickedness.
- The flesh can gratify, but never **satisfy**. True satisfaction only comes through your relationship and **walk** with Jesus Christ.
- *“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”*
Philippians 1:11
- *“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”* **Colossians 2:10**

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“THE PROBLEM OF THE FLESH”

- PART 3

Introduction:

- Jesus told His disciples, “...*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” Matthew 26:41
- Jesus also said in John 6:63 that the spirit quickeneth, but the flesh profits nothing.
- In the Bible, the flesh is identified as being that part of you that is unregenerate and at enmity with God. In your flesh is said to dwell the **law** of sin.
- In this message, we will study God's Word and discover the Christian's relationship to the flesh, why we walk after the flesh, what happens when we walk after the flesh, and how we overcome the flesh.

- 1. The Christian's *identity* is no longer associated with the flesh.**
- 2. The flesh cannot enslave the Christian unless the Christian *chooses* to follow the flesh.**
- 3. Walking in the flesh *always* brings dreadful consequences.**
- 4. A fleshly walk may look *good* to others, but *never* to God.**
 - Walking after the flesh simply means that you are living your life through your **own** abilities, strength, and power, rather than through the **life** and power of Jesus Christ.

- It is **self**-effort rather than divine empowerment.
- It is you trying to live for God rather than **trusting** God to live through you.
- When you walk after the flesh, your actions may look very good and noble to others. 1 Corinthians 1:26; 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
 - You can be very busy doing things **for** God, yet all of it is stemming from the **energy** of the flesh.
 - *“Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men.)*
2 Chronicles 6:30
 - When you walk in the self-dependence of the flesh (no matter how noble it may look to others), it cannot **please** God. 1 Corinthians 1:29; Romans 7:18
 - *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”* **John 6:63**
 - Anything that is done **apart** from a faith and dependence on Christ is fleshly sin.

- God doesn't want to simply **help** your fleshly effort. He wants to be the source of your life in **everything**.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

“THE PROBLEM OF THE FLESH”

- PART 4

Introduction:

- Jesus told His disciples, “...*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” Matthew 26:41
- Jesus also said in John 6:63 that the spirit quickeneth, but the flesh profits nothing.
- In the Bible, the flesh is identified as being that part of you that is unregenerate and at enmity with God. In your flesh is said to dwell the **law** of sin.
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- 1. The Christian's *identity* is no longer associated with the flesh.**
- 2. The flesh cannot enslave the Christian unless the Christian *chooses* to follow the flesh.**
- 3. Walking in the flesh *always* brings dreadful consequences.**
- 4. A fleshly walk may look *good* to others, but *never* to God.**

5. The only answer to the problem of the flesh is to *walk* in the Spirit.

- If you are saved, you have Christ's Spirit living **in you** (Romans 8:9-11). But, when it comes to overcoming the problem of the flesh, the Bible talks about **walking** in the Spirit. Romans 8:1, 4; Galatians 5:16
- Just because you **have** the Holy Spirit does not mean that you are **walking** in the Spirit. Galatians 5:25; cf. Ephesians 5:18
- What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?
 - As the believer yields himself to Christ and rests in Him (depending on Him completely), he is **filled** (controlled) by Christ's Spirit. Colossians 2:6-7
- Walking in the Spirit means that you are living a life that relies on Christ as your **source** of life and strength.
- This is what Paul was trying to get the Galatians to see in Galatians 3:1-3.
 - Christ isn't simply **in** your life - He **is** your life!

- Walking in the Spirit means that you are not focused on your sin or the law or religious rules or religious performance - your focus is **Christ** alone.
- *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Colossians 3:1-4*

Living the Christian Life:

The Surest Way to Fail

Colossians 2

Introduction:

- Mankind has devised a myriad of religious systems whereby one can supposedly find **favor** with God.
- In 1 Corinthians 3:11 we learn that **Christ** is the only foundation.
- But verse 10 says that every man should take heed how he **build** thereupon.
- Many people have built their Christian lives on a religious system of rules, laws, and moral values.
- This is not God's plan for your life. In fact, it is the surest way to fail.
- In Colossians 2 we will examine four reasons why this is true.

First, because religious systems are *man-made*. vs. 4, 8, 16, 18, 22

- The Pharisees had an intricate religious system of laws and traditions, but Jesus said that they made clean the outside, but they were **filthy** on the inside.
- *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”* **Matthew 23:15**

Second, religious systems create *pride*. vs. 18

- Religious systems create two reactions in people: pride or discouragement.
 1. When you're **keeping** the rules, you feel very good about yourself - a sense of pride.
 2. When you're **not** keeping the rules, you feel discouragement and condemnation.

Third, religious systems cannot bring victory over *sin*. vs. 20-23

- You can't overcome fleshly **sins** with fleshly **effort**.

Fourth, religious systems lead you away from *faith* in Christ. vs. 8

- Religious systems are mere substitutes for a personal, intimate **walk** by faith with Jesus Christ.
- Religious systems are **shadows** (vs. 17) that Satan uses to lead people away from the only source of true life and power - Jesus!

Living the Christian Life:

The Only Way to Build It Colossians 2

Introduction:

- You build your Christian life on the same basis on which you **started** it - total faith and trust in Jesus Christ.
Colossians 2:6-7
- God's desire is that your life be built upon Christ **alone**.
- Paul explains why this is the only way to build our Christian life.

First, because Christ alone possesses *wisdom*. 2:3

- Wisdom is exercising **proper** discernment.
- Every day we make **choices** and decisions and we must have spiritual discernment.
- All **true** wisdom is found in Christ.

Second, because Christ alone possesses *knowledge*. 2:3

Third, because Christ alone possesses *power*. 2:9-10

- *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."*
Matthew 28:18
- All divine **power** is found in Christ, and if you are saved, you are in Christ.

- Your greatest need is to apply and utilize what you have been **given** in Christ.
- As you walk in Him, depending upon Him daily, that divine power **flows** through you. Ephesians 3:16, 17, 20

**Fourth, because Christ alone possesses *life*.
2:13**

- Because I am in Christ, I am a partaker of His resurrection life.
- After you are saved, as you walk in Him by faith, His resurrection life **lives** through you. Galatians 2:20
- Christ didn't just **give** you life - He **is** your life.

Concluding thoughts:

- When you believe on Christ, you are placed in Christ and He is **all** you need. Colossians 2:10
- As you received Him by **faith** at salvation, you walk by faith in Him every moment.

Living the Christian Life:

Quit Trying to Live for God

Introduction:

- The phrase “living for God” is **never** found in the entire New Testament.
- Living for God indicates that I am doing something to help God. I am doing something on God’s behalf.
- The truth is - what can I do for the God of this universe?
- We need to stop trying to live for God and we need to get back to the emphasis of the New Testament.

What is the focus of the New Testament concerning Christian living?

First, my new *position* in Christ.

- When a person places his **faith** in Christ, the Holy Spirit enters into him, baptizes him into the **body** of Christ, and he is now said to be “in Christ.” Galatians 3:26-28
- The emphasis in Paul’s epistles to the church is not on what the believer can do **for** Christ, but rather what God has already done for the believer **in** Christ.

Second, living my life *unto* Christ.

- “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live **unto God.**” Galatians 2:19

- Living **for** God indicates that I am initiating something on God's behalf.
- Living **unto** God carries the idea of "**surrendered** to God." Romans 6:13, 12:1; 2 Corinthians 5:15

Third, Christ living *through* me.

- Clearly, the Bible teaches that the moment I am saved, Christ comes to live inside of me. Romans 8:9-10; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27
- Christ came to live inside of me so I could experience and express His **life**. Colossians 3:4; Philippians 1:21
- The emphasis isn't on me **doing** something for Him, but rather Him doing something through me.
- Do I serve? Do I labor? Absolutely - but not through my power or strength, but through **Christ** living in and through me. Colossians 1:29; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:20; 1 Corinthians 15:10

- **Law** says, "You'd better live **for** God and do the things He expects - you'd better do something **for** God."
- **Grace** says, "God, you've saved me and done everything for me in Christ - now here I am, surrendered to You - do **through me** whatever You will."

**Quit trying to live for Jesus and let Jesus
live through you!**

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."
1 Thessalonians 5:24

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: Our Greatest Need

Introduction:

- There was a church that Jesus rebuked in Revelation 3:14-19.
- They were wealthy and prosperous and thought they had *need* of nothing.
- Many people have no clue what their greatest needs are.
- Thankfully, God has revealed to us our greatest need. If we are to live our lives as God intended, we must know what God says is our greatest need.
- In this message, we will examine two common misconceptions, and then see the answer from God's Word.

Our greatest need is NOT *religion*.

- We lack justification before a *holy* God and there is no religious system that can give us righteousness before Him. Galatians 3:10-11
- If mankind doesn't need religion, what do they need?
 - ◆ Mankind needs "*the truth of the gospel.*" Galatians 2:5, 14
 - ◆ The true gospel centers in the person and *work* of Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:6-7, 3:13
 - ◆ On the cross, Jesus was made a *curse* for us. He was delivered up to die for our offences.

- ◆ *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* **Romans 4:25**
- ◆ *“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.”*
1 Peter 3:18
- The gospel reveals that Jesus is offering His own righteousness to all those who will simply turn to Him in **faith** and trust Him as their Savior.
Galatians 3:24, 26; Ephesians 1:12-13

Our greatest need is NOT to have *purpose*.

- There are many people who have found purpose in life, but they found it without God or His Son, Jesus Christ.
- *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”* **Proverbs 14:12**
- If you are not saved, God’s purpose for you is this - He desires for you to believe on His Son, and be **saved** from your sin. 1 Timothy 2:4-6
- If you are a believer, you do not have to travel on a forty day spiritual journey to understand God’s purposes for you. God has clearly revealed them in His **Word**.
- Your greatest need is to be taught the **truth** of sound doctrine, and believe it by faith.
- ◆ *“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”*
1 Thessalonians 2:13

- What is our greatest need?
- Our greatest need is **truth**. Jesus said in John 8:32, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

Living the Christian Life:
It's All About Jesus
Colossians

Introduction:

- Satan's goal is to corrupt your mind from the simplicity that is in Christ.
- *"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."*
2 Corinthians 11:3

Satan wants to convince you in your mind that the basis of your life and ministry is:

Your *performance* - 2:8

- Many of these believers were trying to perform according to men's expectations.
- God never intended for our focus to be on performing and producing. What should be our focus?
- God wants our **focus** to be on the person of Jesus Christ. 1:27, 29
- It is not about results **you** can produce, it's about fruit Christ bears through you.

Your *rules of conduct* - 2:19-23

- The Colossian believers had become obsessed with the correct rules of conduct. 2:20-23
- They were so obsessed with their rules that they were no longer **holding** the Head - Jesus. vs. 19

- True spiritual **growth** only takes place within the context of a personal relationship with Christ. 2:7

Your **abilities** - 1:11, 29

- When you were saved, you did not bring to God a list of your abilities. You simply pleaded the cross; you turned to Christ and trusted Him to save you.
- This is exactly how God wants us to walk **after** we are saved.
- Walking in Christ means you are depending on **His** resources, not your **own**.

- Jesus didn't come to live within you so you could perform better, keep the rules, and serve Him in your power and strength. He came to live within you to express His divine life through you.
- It's not about what **you** can do for Christ - it's about what **Christ** can do through you!