



What's Next?

(Now That You Are Saved, How Do You Live Life?)

Bill Loveless
Christ Is Life Ministries

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What's Next?

INTRODUCTION

Welcome To This Study

I trust that if you are reading this booklet that you have recently made a decision to trust Christ as your personal Savior. If so, welcome to God's family.

Now that you have trusted Christ for salvation, you may be asking one or more of these questions:

- What's next now that I am saved?
- How do I live the Christian life?
- What are the results of living the Christian life?

My goal is to answer these questions and several more that may come up as you read through this booklet. The answers to these questions are crucial in truly understanding "what's next" in your Christian journey. Let's start by looking at what I call the two sides of the cross.

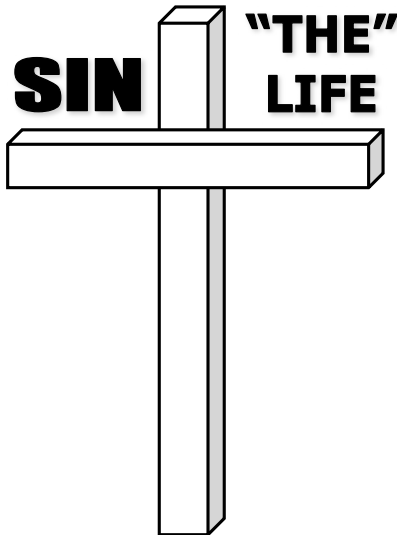
CHAPTER ONE

The SIN Side Of The Cross

Introduction To The Two Sides Of The Cross

The two sides of the cross are the “SIN” side of the cross and “THE LIFE” side of the cross. Look at the diagram below that illustrates this.

The Two Sides of The Cross



For the rest of this chapter, we will focus on the SIN side of the cross.

What Is The SIN Side Of The Cross?

The SIN side of the cross is what I call the “good news” of the gospel. It is good news because by trusting Jesus for salvation, you enter into eternal life. The SIN side of the cross is the one you are most familiar with because of your recent salvation experience. I define salvation as:

***Being saved from ALL your past, present, and future sins the
MOMENT you trusted Christ by faith to be your Savior.***

Whether someone was sharing or you were reading the good news of the gospel yourself, you may have heard some key truths like the following that led to your decision to trust Jesus as your Savior.

1. We are all sinners.

*“for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23*

2. We are “spiritually” dead because of our sins.

*“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and **(spiritual) death through sin**, and so (spiritual) death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12 (Parenthesis mine)*

3. Our SINS have SEPARATED us from God.

*“But **your sins have made a separation between you and your God**, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear.” Isaiah 59:2*

*“at that time **separate from Christ.... having no hope and without God in the world.**” Ephesians 2:12*

4. Jesus went to the cross to BEAR (TAKE) our sins on his body.

*“and **He (Jesus) Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross**, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.” 1 Peter 2:24 (Parenthesis mine)*

5. As a result, ALL our sins (past, present, and future) have been FORGIVEN.

*“in whom (Jesus) we have redemption, **the forgiveness of sins.**” Colossians 1:14 (Parenthesis mine)*

*“He is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and **our sins are forgiven.**” Ephesians 1:7 (NLT)*

6. To be saved from our sins, we must BELIEVE IN CHRIST as our Savior.

*“and after he brought them out, he said, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**” They said, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved**, you and your household.” Acts 16:30, 31*

7. As a result of BELIEVING IN CHRIST as our Savior, we have ETERNAL LIFE.

*“He who **believes in the Son has eternal life...**” John 3:36a*

Now that we have looked at the key truths of the SIN side of the cross let's look again at the illustration.



SIN

- We were born sinners – Romans 3:23
- We were spiritually dead Romans 5:12
- Our sins separated us from God – Isaiah 59:2
- Jesus bore all our sins on the cross – 1 Peter 2:24
- All our sins have been forgiven – Ephesians 1:7
- Salvation results in trusting in Christ as our Savior – John 3:36

The SIN Side Of The Cross

I hope that the day you trusted Christ was as memorable as mine. I trusted Christ for salvation when I was 18. A retired pastor, led me to Christ. I will never forget that day. However, salvation is just the beginning because from that day forward we have to live life. Therefore, you might be asking what's next now that I have been saved. Let me begin answering that question by telling you about the LIFE side of the cross.

Note: If you are not sure that you have received Christ for salvation, you can do that right now. You can simply say the following prayer in faith and receive forgiveness and salvation. "Dear Lord, I recognize that I am a sinner in need of a Savior. As a result of You dying on the cross for my sins, I receive You by faith to be my Savior. Amen."

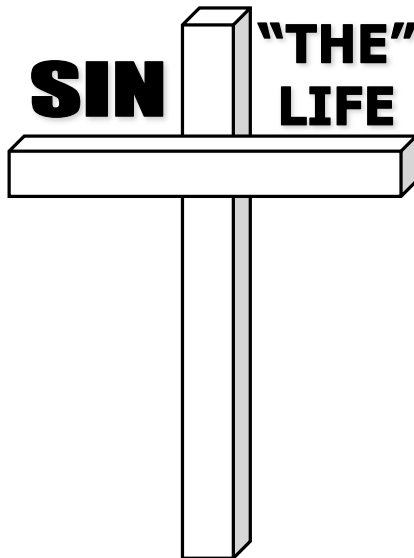
CHAPTER TWO

What Is “THE” Christian LIFE?

Introduction

In this lesson and the next three lessons we will talk about “THE” LIFE side of the cross. I call it THE LIFE side of the cross because it focuses on how we are to live THE Christian life now that we are saved.

“THE” LIFE Side Of The Cross



Now that you are saved, the next key question is how do you live THE Christian life. As a former general contractor, I had to have a good, solid foundation before I built anything on that foundation. It is the same way in living the Christian life.

Without knowing the true “spiritual” foundation for THE Christian life then everything you build on will be a false foundation and will eventually fail. The Bible sums up the “spiritual” foundation like this in 1 Corinthians 3:11.

*“For no man can lay a **foundation** other than the one which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ.**” 1 Corinthians 3:11*

This is a powerful verse because if we don’t build on the foundation of Jesus Christ then we will fail in our Christian journey. However, when I first became a Christian I was told that there was another foundation. I was told that living the Christian life was a “checklist” of things God expects me to do FOR Him. Here are some examples that were on the checklist.

- Learn and understand what the Bible says.
- Pray
- Have a quiet time with the Lord
- Gather with other Christians (i.e. go to church)
- Minister to others
- Share the gospel with others

The truth is that all of these things are an essential part of the Christian walk (I will discuss these later in Chapter Five) but they are not the foundation for living THE Christian life. I will share more of my story later how my building on the foundation of a “checklist” Christian walk failed. I don’t want you to start your Christian walk building on the same false foundation. In order not to do that, let’s begin understanding what it means that the real spiritual foundation is Jesus Christ.. I call this foundation THE LIFE side of the cross. Therefore, let’s look at three key truths from the Bible to see what God says is the foundation of the meaning of THE LIFE.

TRUTH #1 - What Is “THE” Christian LIFE?

Let's begin answering this question by reading what Jesus says about “THE” Life.

1. What Jesus says is “THE” Christian Life

Jesus said:

*“...**I AM** the way, the truth, and **THE LIFE**...”*

John 14:6

*“...**I AM** the resurrection and **THE LIFE**.”*

John 11:25

Think about what Jesus is saying in these two passages. He is saying that He Himself is **THE** Life. When Jesus says THE Life, He is referring to THE Christian life. Therefore if Christ is THE Life what can we conclude:

“THE” Christian LIFE is a Person.

It is Jesus Christ HIMSELF.

This may be a little hard to grasp at this point but let me continue to unfold what the Bible says and I believe it will eventually make sense. Let's build on what Jesus said by looking at the words of the apostle Paul.

2. The Apostle Paul Confirms What Jesus Says

The apostle Paul wrote much of the New Testament. Because of that, I believe it is important to focus on some key truths that he had to share about “THE” Life. In the book of Philippians he wrote,

“To live to me is Christ.”

Philippians 1:21

Look closely at what Paul is saying. When Paul says “to live” he means to live THE Christian life. When he finishes the verse with the two words “is Christ,” he is saying THE Christian life is Christ Himself. Therefore, if I were to paraphrase what Paul said in Philippians 1:21 above, it would read like this:

“To live the Christian life is Christ Himself.”

What Paul is doing is affirming what Jesus said when he wrote those words.

Why Might What Jesus and Paul Said Be Difficult To Grasp?

At this point what Jesus and Paul are saying may be a little difficult to understand. Why? When you think of living the Christian life, you might equate it to living life in general. I say this because up to this point you have learned how to do certain things and as a result, you do them. For example, you learned how to drive your car and you drive it. You learned how to do your job and you do it. In learning these things, you are using your ability and intellect to master these things.

So, it makes sense to think that living THE Christian life is something that you learn and then master. However, when it comes to living THE Christian life, we are going to discover that it is not like the rest of life where we learn and then do. Let me share a very key word at this point to help you better understand the difference.

The Word “Source”

Let me give you the meaning of the word source as it relates to you living your life.

If it is up to you, using your own intellect, ability, and experience, to live and maneuver through life, then you are the source for living life.

As a new Christian, you have been living life up to this point as your own source to manage and maneuver through life. You might ask yourself at this point how “successful” you have been in accomplishing this.

The question is, “Can you be the source to live or produce THE Christian life?” Let’s look at the answer to that question in the next section.

Who Is The “SOURCE” To Live THE Christian Life?

Since you have been your own source up to now in living your life, you may assume that now that you have been saved, you will just continue to be the to source to live THE Christian life. Even though that may be a logical conclusion, let’s look at what the Apostle Paul says about this in 1 Corinthians 1:30.

“He (Jesus) is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, ...”
(Parenthesis mine)

Who is Paul saying the source is to live THE Christian life? Paul is saying that Jesus is the SOURCE when it comes to living THE Christian life. Think about this question for a moment:

***If JESUS is the SOURCE to live THE Christian life
then who is NOT the source?***

Wouldn't the answer be "you." Let me share another definition of the word "source" to clarify. Source also means "the one who produces." If Jesus is the Source to live the Christian life, then we can conclude this:

***Jesus, as the SOURCE, is the one who PRODUCES
THE Christian life.***

This may seem a little hard to understand because all you have known up to this point is that you have been the source to live life.

Before I explain this truth further, let me give you two more verses that confirm that Jesus is the Source when it comes to living the Christian life.

"In Him (Jesus) we live and move and have our being."
(Parenthesis mine) Acts 17:28

The words "In Him" mean "through Christ." Since we now know that Christ is our Source, then we might restate this verse like this:

***"Through Christ as our Source, we live and move and
have our being."***

Think about this verse for a moment. It looks like what Acts 17:28 is saying is that Jesus is the Source for every area of our lives. Let's look at one more verse to further confirm this.

“For *from Him [Jesus as the Source]* and *through Him [Jesus as the Source]* and *to Him [Jesus as the Source]* are all things.....” (Parenthesis mine) Romans 11:36

Here again, since Jesus is our Source, I added the words “Jesus as the Source” in brackets to give you a clearer understanding of the meaning of the passage. When you see the words “from,” “through,” and “to,” they all point back to Christ as the Source. Let me share part of Christian journey to explain what it means that Christ is the Source.

My Christian Journey For The First 30 Years

As I mentioned, I became a Christian at age 18, but I did not get serious about my Christian walk until I was 22. At that point, I asked another Christian, “What am I supposed to **do** to live the Christian life?”

I asked this question because everything in my life was something that I learned and then went out and accomplished. Therefore, I thought this “learn and do” mentality applied to living the Christian life. In other words, I thought I was the “source” to produce it.

Here are some of the things I was told to produce or live THE Christian life:

1. “I was told to take what I learned from the Bible and go out and **try** to accomplish what it says.”
2. “I was taught that I need to **try** to stop sinning.”
3. “I was taught to **try** to keep God’s rules and commands.”
4. “It was up to me with God’s help to **try** to change myself.”

I believe that if I tried and accomplished these things then I believed I would become a “successful” Christian. So, being a “Type A” guy, I tried and worked very hard to try to accomplish all of those things for thirty years as a Christian. The problem is that the more I tried the more I failed. I was getting more frustrated with my Christian walk because I was really not able to accomplish any of those things consistently.

The result was that I felt more and more like a failure because I could not get done what everyone was telling me that I needed to “do” to live the Christian life. What was the problem? Why was I failing? The problem was that I was the source to try and “produce” THE Christian life. I discovered at the end of those 30 years, I was believing a lie concerning living THE Christian life. Here is the lie I was believing:

THE LIE

***That I could be the source to live and
produce THE Christian life.***

It wasn't until the end of that 30 year journey that I heard what you are learning now, that Christ Himself is THE Christian life. One day I was sitting in church when we had a guest speaker. His name was Ian Thomas. When he got up to speak he said these words:

***“God never intended for you to live THE life that
ONLY Christ can live in and through you.”***

I was stunned by these words because he was the first person in my thirty years as a Christian to ever tell me that it was not up to me to be the source to try to live the Christian life. He was saying the same things that Jesus and Paul were saying that only Christ can be the Source to live and produce THE Christian life. God used those words that day to change my Christian life forever.

Why? Because I no longer “tried” to live THE Christian life. I no longer saw myself as the Source. I began to see Christ and Christ alone as THE Source of THE Life. There is one more thing I need to make clear before we continue. It is the issue of God helping us. Let me take a few minutes to explain.

Why Does God Not HELP Us?

As I shared with you, I asked God for those first 30 years to help me live the Christian life. However, He never once helped me in all those years. The question is “Why?” The answer is that if God is THE Source for producing THE Christian life then why would He help me try to be the source?

Either you are going to be the source (like I was for 30 years) to TRY to live the Christian life or God is going to be THE Source. If you continue trying to live life being the source the eventual result is that you will fail. You see, there can only be one source and that source is God who is also the Creator. Therefore, as The Source, God is not going to help me (or you) be your own source for trying to live the Christian life..

Before we end this lesson, let’s look at one more truth about THE LIFE side of the cross.

TRUTH #2 - At The Point You Were Saved, God Put The FULLNESS of Himself Into Man

At the moment of salvation, you not only received Jesus as your Savior, but you also received the complete Godhead (God the Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit). We see this in Colossians 2:9, 10:

*"For in Christ all the **fullness of the Deity** lives in bodily form, and **you have been given fullness in Christ**, who is the head over every power and authority."*

And again in Ephesians 3:19:

*"... and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be **filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**"*

These verses are telling us that you have the God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit living within you. You no longer have a God Who is separated from you. You now have the complete Godhead IN you! Why is this important to know?

With ALL of God living within us, we now

CONTAIN THE Life in us.

TRUTH #3 – As a result of Christ Himself Being THE Life and God putting have the fullness of God in you, that God can now be our Source to live THE Christian life.

Summary

We now know three key truths from this lesson:

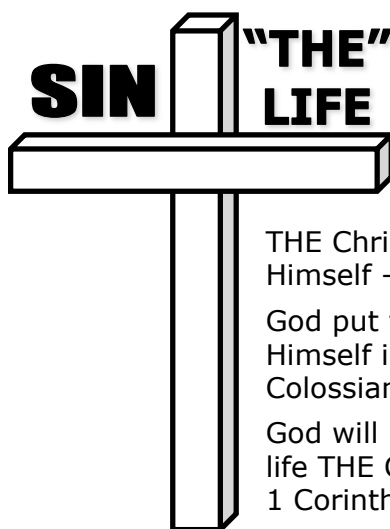
Truth #1 – Christ Himself is THE Christian Life. – John 14:6

Truth #2 – God put the fullness of Himself (God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) into Christians. – Colossians 2:9, 10

Truth #3 – The result is that God living in us will be the Source for living THE Christian Life. – 1 Corinthians 1:30

Let's illustrate these three truths using the cross diagram on the following page.

"THE" LIFE Side Of The Cross



THE Christian Life is Christ Himself –John 14:6

God put the FULLNESS of Himself in man - Colossians 2:9, 10

God will be the SOURCE to life THE Christian life – 1 Corinthians 1:30

Now that we understand the SIN side and THE LIFE side of the cross let's look at the practical application of what it means for God to be your Source.

CHAPTER THREE

Practical Application of God Being Your Source

Introduction

I hope at this point you understand that the Christian life is not something we learn and do. It is Christ Himself. since it is true that Jesus is our Source, what does it look like in real life for Him to be our Source. Let's look at some practical applications of Christ being our Source.

God As The Source Concerning His Promises

Throughout the Bible we see many promises God has made to Christians. I want to look at some of these promises to show you how they relate to God being the Source. Before we start, here is a key truth that is important to understand.

It is NOT up to you to KEEP God's promises or PRODUCE His promises in your life. That is God's job as your Source.

A Bible verse that bears this truth out is Philippians 1:6:

"being confident of this, that **He (God)** who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:6

The Apostle Paul is telling us that God as the Source began the good work in you at salvation and will continue being the Source to produce His promises in your life. Now let's look at four examples of the promises of God.

Four Of God's Promises

Promise #1 – God promises to set you FREE.

Here are two verses that focus on this promise.

*“You will know the truth and **the truth will set you free.**”*

John 8:32

*“So Christ has really set us **free**. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.”*

Galatians 5:1

Why is this promise so important to you? Think about some sin pattern in your life. Some examples of sin patterns are anger, being controlling, pornography, or being prideful. What God promises is that He, as your Source, will set you free from your particular sin patterns. You may have tried to set yourself free but the truth is that only God can keep that promise.

Promise #2 – God promises to HEAL your woundedness.

You may have been wounded in the past by such things as verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse. Or you may have been wounded by traumatic events such as a divorce or the loss of a child. These events can result in deep woundedness that must be healed. Let's look at God's promise to be the Healer.

*“**He heals the brokenhearted** and binds up their wounds.”*

Psalms 147:3

No matter how deep the woundedness you may be experiencing, God will heal you.

Promise #3 – God promises to TRANSFORM your life.

This is a wonderful promise because we all have things about ourselves that we would like changed. Let's look at a Bible verses that contains this promise.

*"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into His (Christ's) likeness** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."
(Parenthesis mine) 2 Corinthians 3:18*

What does it mean that we will be transformed into the likeness of Christ?

***Being transformed into the LIKENESS of Christ means
that God will transform you to THINK, FEEL,
CHOOSE, and BEHAVE like Jesus.***

This is a great promise because think for a moment how your life would be different if you were thinking, feeling, choosing, and behaving more like Christ. As with the other two promises, God will be the Source to transform your life.

Promise #4 - God promises to have a PERSONAL, INTIMATE relationship with you.

One of the most profound promises is that God wants to have a personal, intimate relationship with you. He so loved you that he died on the cross for you. Now that you are saved He wants a personal relationship with you. Look at the following verse that bears this out.

*"His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into His own family by **bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ.**
And this gave Him great pleasure." Ephesians 1:5*

Even before you were born, God was anticipating your birth because He was so looking forward to having a personal relationship with you. The moment you were born He started drawing you to Himself. Now that you are saved you have God living within you in order to have a love relationship with you.

Summary

I hope this chapter has given you a little more practical understanding of what it means for God to be your Source. In this next chapter we will look at what your part is in living THE Christian life. As a final reminder, remember this:

***God, as your Source will make ALL His promises to you an
EXPERIENTIAL reality in your life.***

CHAPTER FOUR

Living “THE” Christian LIFE

Introduction

Now that you know that Christ is the Source for living THE life and some of the practical application of that truth, you may be asking the question, “What is my part in living “THE” Christian Life?” Let me begin answering that question by looking at a very important passage out of the book of John. I will break this verse down into four parts.

PART ONE- The Vine and The Branches

Let’s look at the words of Jesus in John 15:5:

“I (Jesus) am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit for apart from Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5 (Parenthesis mine)

Through this verse Jesus is going to show us how to live THE Christian life. He says in the first part of this verse that He is the vine and we are the branches. The first thing we need to understand is the relationship between a physical branch and a physical vine. The physical vine is the source for everything the physical branch needs to live and eventually bear fruit. We know this because when a branch is cut off from the vine what happens to the branch? It dies. Therefore, the physical branch lives as it receives what it needs from the vine.

How does this verse apply to you and me? Jesus is saying that He is the spiritual vine and we are the spiritual branches. As the spiritual vine Jesus is the Source to supply every one of our needs and to be the Source to make His promises to us an experiential reality. The next phrase shows us how to live in

relationship to Jesus.

PART TWO – ABIDING In Christ

The second part John 15:5 says, “*he who **abides** in Me (Jesus).*” The key word in this verse is “abide.” Let me give you some other words that mean to “abide:”

- remains
- draws from
- lives from
- participates with

Just for a moment, re-read the phrase “*he who abides in Me*” inserting each of the words from the list above for the word “abide.” (i.e. “he who remains in me.”) All of these words can be summed up into one word and that word is “dependence.” Abiding in Christ can be summed up this way:

As spiritual branches, our part in living THE Christian Life is to live in total DEPENDENCE on Jesus, the spiritual vine.

Before we look at the verse further, let’s talk more about the word “dependence.”

Let’s Take A Deeper Look At The Word DEPENDENCE

Let me give you a simple definition of “dependence” as it pertains to living THE Christian life.

DEPENDENCE is putting your confidence and trust in God to accomplish what He promises to accomplish in your life

God promises to accomplish many things in your life. The key for Him to make those promises an experiential reality is for you to depend on Him to do what He promises. Let me give you some practical examples of some of God's promises and practically what dependence looks like to experience those promises.

Example #1 - God promises in Romans 12:2 to change you by changing the way you think.

"...but be transformed (changed) by the renewing of your mind..." Romans 12:2 (Parenthesis mine)

God is saying that He can transform or change your life when you totally depend on Him as the Source to renew your mind. (i.e. to change the way you think). For example, if you are critical of people then God wants to change your thinking so that you love and accept them rather than being critical of them. As you live in dependence on Him, He will change or transform your critical attitude into acceptance and even love.

Example #2 - God promises to change you so that you don't live from your sinful behaviors. The verse below reveals some examples of sinful behavior.

*"But now is the time to get rid of **anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.**" Colossians 3:8*

For example, if you are angry because your father or mother abused or wounded you, that is sinful behavior. As you

live dependently on God, He will change your anger into godly behaviors such as forgiveness and love. A key point that I want to share at this point is that to change your attitudes through your own strength (acting as your own source) never works.

Example #3 – God promises to set you free from sin strongholds such as fear, anxiety, pornography, alcohol, etc. in John 8:32.

*“You will know the truth and **the truth will set you free.**”*
John 8:32

This is a wonderful promise from God. The truth in this verse refers to God’s truth that is in the Bible. Let’s assume you struggle with pornography. As you learn God’s truth and walk dependently on God, He will eventually set you free from pornography.

I hope these examples have helped you better understand what it means to “abide in” or “depend on” Christ as your Source. Let’s look at the last part of this verse.

PART THREE - To Bear Fruit

The last part of John 15:5 says this: *“bears much fruit for apart from Me you can do nothing.”*

Think about this for a moment. Does the physical branch produce the fruit or does the vine through the branch produce the fruit? Since the vine is the source, then the fruit is produced through the branch. You might think that the branch produces the fruit but it is the vine that does the production. How does this part of John 15:5 apply to you?

**As you live *DEPENDENTLY* on Christ (the vine), He
PRODUCES fruit in and through you (the branch).**

What is the “fruit” that Christ produces in and through you? Look at Galatians 2:22 to see some examples of the fruit Christ produces in and through you.

*“But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.**” Galatians 5:22*

Let me give you some other examples of Christ’s fruit:

Victory	Worth	Acceptance
Forgiveness	Freedom	Patience
Security	Strength	Peace
Hope	Humility	Selflessness
Courage	Rest	Wisdom

Note: These examples are not human-produced characteristics. They are Christ-produced characteristics. In other words, Christ produces His victory, His worth, His acceptance, etc. in you. The difference between human-produced characteristics and Christ-produced characteristics is that human characteristics can come and go as a result of good or bad circumstances. Whereas, Christ-produced characteristics remain unchanged despite regardless of the circumstances.

Let me give you an example. Let’s say that you struggle with impatience towards a friend. As you walk dependent on Christ, He will eventually replace your impatience with His patience.

Think about this question for a moment: How would it change your life if you were living from all of Christ's fruit listed above?

PART FOUR – “Apart From Me You Can Nothing”

This is the final part of John 15:5. What does Jesus mean by saying “*apart from Me you can do nothing.*” Let me sum up the answer to this question this way:

***Jesus is saying that you CAN'T live THE Christian
life that only He CAN live in and through you.***

You see, our tendency is to try and be the source to live THE Christian life that only Christ can live. Jesus is confirming in this part of John 15:5 that you can never succeed in being the Source.

Before we end this section, let's look further at what Jesus means by the word “nothing.” You know that you can do many things such as drive your car, do your job, etc. If this is true, then what is Jesus saying that you can't do apart from Him? Let me give you some examples.

- You can't renew your mind to God's truth.
- You can't produce Christ-produced fruit.
- You can't set yourself free from your sin strongholds.
- You can't change your sinful behavior into godly behavior.

To sum it up, “nothing” means that you CAN’T produce ANY of what God’s promises you in His word (the Bible).

This is good news because as the branch, you don't even have to try to produce God's promises. As you live dependently on Him, He will produce all of His fruit and His promises in your life. Knowing and believing this will save you from trying to do something you can't do and were never intended to do.

I hope going through John 15:5 has given you a better understanding of what your part is in living THE Christian life.

Summary Of What We Have Learned

Let's summarize everything we have learned up to this point of the booklet:

1. There are two sides of the cross. The SIN side and THE LIFE side.
2. The SIN side of the cross is what Jesus did on the cross to save us from our sins so that we can have eternal life with Him.
3. THE LIFE side of the cross is made up of three parts:
 - a. Christ Himself is THE Christian Life. – John 14:6
 - b. God put the fullness of Himself (God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit) into Christians. – Colossians 2:9, 10
 - c. The result is that God living in us will be the Source for living THE Christian Life. – 1 Corinthians 1:30

4. John 15:5 shows us how we are to live THE Christian life:
 - a. Jesus is the vine/Source and we are the branches/recipients of what God promises.
 - b. Our part in living THE Christian life is to live in moment by moment dependence on Christ.
 - c. As we live dependently on Christ, He will produce His fruit (i.e. love, acceptance, peace, etc.) in and through us.
 - d. We can't produce any of God's promises or Christ's fruit in our lives.

So, I hope that you better understand that THE Christian life is not about learning what to do and doing it in your own strength and ability. It is participating with God by depending on Him to do what He promises to do. In this last lesson, I want to revisit the checklist that I told you about in Chapter One.

CHAPTER FIVE

Participating With God To Build On THE Foundation

Introduction

I hope by now that at least you have an intellectual understanding of what it means for Jesus to be the “spiritual” foundation to build on. Now that we have some understanding of Jesus as our foundation, we can start building on that foundation.

In Chapter One, I told you that when I first became a Christian I was told that the foundation for living THE Christian life was a “checklist” of things God expects me to do FOR Him. Here is the checklist again:

- Learn and understand what the Bible says.
- Pray
- Have a quiet time with the Lord
- Gather with other Christians (i.e. go to church)
- Minister to others

I was told that I, as the source, was to accomplish this list. By doing so, I could live THE Christian life. As I shared with you, for 30 years I attempted to become the source by “doing the list” thinking I was living THE Christian life. I also thought I was accomplishing the list because that is what God needed for me to do FOR Him. I thought it was the only way to please Him. However, I realized as I hope you do now that foundation for living THE Christian life is not a checklist. Rather, it is Jesus Himself.

Now that we have a foundation of Christ being THE Christian life let’s revisit and build on that foundation of Christ

and learn how to participate with God in accomplishing these things because they are Biblical and are a vital part of our spiritual growth. I call these things five “spiritual pillars” for spiritual growth. Here is a key truth concerning these “spiritual pillars.”

Spiritual pillars are NOT something we do to attain THE Christian life. Rather, we PARTICIPATE with God as we do these things which will be used by Him transform our lives.

When we talked about “abiding” earlier in this booklet, one of the words I used to describe “abiding” is “participate.” I define “participation,” in relationship to the spiritual pillars as depending on God when you read your Bible, pray, have a quiet time, etc. These spiritual pillars were not meant to be done independent of God.

Rather, you are to participate with God as you do each one of these things. Therefore, I want to spend the rest of this chapter, giving you practical examples of what participating with God looks like as we discuss each of these spiritual pillars.

1. Participating With God To Learn And Understand The Bible

The Bible says in Hebrews 4:12:

*“For the **word of God is living and active** and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Hebrews 4:12.*

Since this verse is true, then it stands to reason that we should read the Bible and learn what it says. We first need to

understand that a non-Christian can also read the Bible and know what it says. The difference is that a non-Christian cannot understand spiritually what the Bible is saying. However, as you read the Bible and you are doing it depending on God these are some of the things God will do:

- Give you understanding of what you are reading.
- Give application to your life of what you are understanding.
- Show you how crucial it is to depend on God to make His truth an experiential reality in your life.

What would participating with God look like when you read the Bible? Here are a few examples of what that might look like:

“Lord, give me understanding and application to my life concerning what I am reading in Your Word.”

“Lord, concerning the promise that I am reading in Your Word only You as my Source can produce that promise.”

What you are doing by seeking the Lord to do these things, is participating with Him while you read His word.

2. Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says:

“Pray without ceasing.”

There are many verses like this which tell us that prayer is a vital part of living THE Christian life. Prayer consists of two parts: **talking** and **listening** to God. Just as in human communication, participating means that we are to talk to and listen to God. Let’s look at these two parts a little closer.

a. Talking To God

God loves it when we talk to Him. Just like a trusted friend, we can talk to God about how we feel. We can ask God to do certain things in your lives such as:

- Reveal to us where what we believe does not line up with the Bible.
- Give you personal application of His truth to every area of your life.
- Change or transform your life to think, feel, choose, and behave like Christ.

We can also ask God to do such things as provide a job or keep our kids safe. Another key part of prayer, is praying for others. You can pray for such things as their willingness to (1) continue depending on God, (2) pursue a relationship with God, and (3) continue growing in Christ.

Another key part of prayer is thanking God. You might take just a moment and thank Him for saving you from your sins. As you live dependently on God as your Source and He changes your life, you will find yourself not only thanking God but praising Him as well for those changes.

b. Listening To God

This part is a little harder in prayer because most likely you will not hear an audible voice from God. However, God can speak to you in many ways. Here are two primary ways the Lord can speak to you:

- Through what you learn in the Bible such as: THE Christian life is a Person not a “to do” list.

- Through thoughts that He may insert in your mind such “I am the Source to produce the fruit of patience in your life,” or “I will provide another job even though you just lost your job.”

Early on it may be difficult to hear the Lord but eventually you will hear His voice through His word and through your thoughts. Think about this. When you came to trust Jesus you may have had a thought like, “I am a sinner in need of a Savior.” Is it possible that God Himself put that thought into your mind.

3. Having Quiet Time Before The Lord

“Be still and know that I am God.” Psalm 46:10

As you begin your Christian journey I will tell you from my experience and the experience of many others that “being still” is the hardest thing for Christians to do even if they have been a Christian many years. The reason is that we are too busy to get quiet and we are so surrounded by noise that to get quiet seems uncomfortable.

It is unnatural in this busy world of ours. However, cultivating a habit participating in being quiet in the Lord’s presence will bring you into a relationship with God that can happen no other way. I believe it is the greatest and most profitable form of participation because through quietness you will develop a deeper hunger and thirst for a relationship with God.

Here are a few thoughts on why we should practice being still or quiet before God.

- God wants to minister to you. By that I mean He may want to do a work in you to change you that can only happen when you are silent.
- When you are quiet, your spiritual ears are better able to listen to what He might want to say to you.
- He just wants you to be still in presence just to love you and enjoy your company.

Here are some practical thoughts on what being quiet before the Lord might look like:

- Find a quiet place in your home or some other location where it is quiet.
- Turn off your cell phone.
- As you sit quietly before the Lord, you will find your mind racing with many thoughts.
- Don't try to control your thoughts. Just let them come in the front door of your mind and go out the back door of your mind.
- It might help to calm your mind by focusing on a passage of the Bible such as Psalm 46:10: *"Be still and know that I am God."*
- Start out for being still for one minute and then begin adding one minute at a time.
- As you develop this habit of being quiet, you will find yourself hearing His voice in your thoughts like you never could in the midst of the noise.
- You will begin to see things about your Christian journey that can only come out of quietness.

Start developing the habit of having quiet time and watch what God will show you. You will discover by developing this habit that it will become easier to depend on Him.

4. Gathering With Other Christians

*“And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, **where many were gathered together and were praying.**” Acts 12:12*

You and I were not made to walk this Christian journey alone. We were created to walk this journey with others. Why?

- To encourage one another and be encouraged.
- To pray for one another and be prayed for.
- To help another in pain and be helped, in turn.
- To teach others and learn from them.
- To remind others of God’s truth and be reminded.

We were designed for community with other Christians. Community can be found through a local church, through a small group study, or doing a ministry project together. Community can even mean sitting down one-on-one with another Christian. The key thing to remember is that you cannot live the Christian life in isolation.

5. Ministering To Others

a. Ministering To Other Christians

Even though you may be beginning your Christian walk you may not think that you don't know enough to minister to others. However, ministry is as simple as sharing a Biblical truth that you just learned.

For example, when you get through reading this book, couldn't you share what you learned and how it impacted your life? That would be easy enough wouldn't it? Just something as simple as that is called ministry.

As you learn more about God's word and depend on God to make it an experiential reality then you will be able to share more with others. At that point ministry to others may look like this:

- Encouraging someone with something from the Bible that you have learned.
- Helping someone through a very difficult time. Especially if you have been through the same struggle.
- When someone is struggling with some sin pattern such as anger, anxiety, pornography, etc. you can pray that the Lord will set them free.
- If someone is believing a lie about the Christian life you can point them to God's truth.

b. Minister To Non-Christians

One of the most important ways you can minister to a non-Christian is to share the gospel. As in the case with you, someone loved you enough to share the wonderful news that Jesus is our Savior and that we can spend eternal life with him. You can also draw others to Christ as you live dependent on Christ. Part of what God does through you as you walk dependent on Him is to love others through you, encourage others through you, and show non-Christians their need for Jesus through you.

In addition to talking about Christ to others, ministry is simply LETTING Christ live His life THROUGH you to draw non-Christians to Himself.

As you grow in your Christian walk, God will show you other ways to minister. For now, I would just encourage you to share what you are learning with whomever the Lord leads you to share it with.

The Original Three Questions

At the beginning of this booklet, I shared with you that I would be answering three basic questions concerning living the Christian life.

- What's next now that I am saved?
- How do I live THE Christian life?
- What are the results of living THE Christian life?

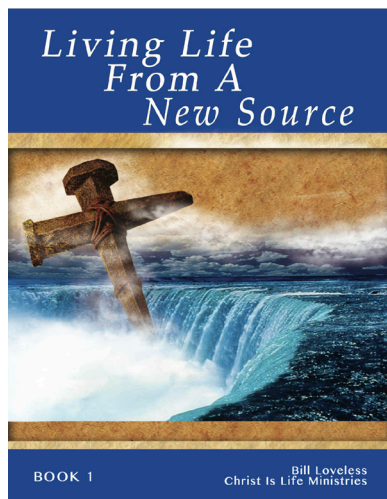
I hope at this point the questions and the answers to these questions make more sense. However, this is just the beginning. There is much more to learn about practically living THE Christian life. As a result, I have a recommendation for your next step in learning more.

Now That I Have Learned These Basic Truths Where Do I Go From Here?

I know that you probably still have many questions about what it looks like to abide in Christ and how depending on God will change and transform your life. I trust that you are encouraged by what you have read and want to know more. Therefore, my suggested next step for you is to go through a curriculum I have written called *Living Life From A New Source*.

It is designed for you to learn more about the truths of living THE Christian life and how to practically apply them to

your life. In this curriculum, I cover the following topics:



1. What is God's part in living THE Christian life.
2. What is your part in living THE Christian life.
3. How to engage God to be transformed personally and in every area of your life.
4. What a transformed life look like.

When you go to our website (www.christislifeministries.com), you may either download *Living Life From A New Source* for free or purchase a written copy of it which will be mailed to you. There are also video lessons on the website that go with this study that you can either watch for free or purchase on DVD.

I hope you will take advantage of this study and seek the Lord for a deeper understanding of what it means that Christ is THE life. My prayer for you is that not only will your life be transformed but that you will share with others how living THE life has transformed your life.

Blessings in Christ,

Bill Loveless

(5-1-17)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

To learn more about Bill and his journey, please go to his website and look at the section called Bill's Personal Journey.

What's Next?

I have written this booklet for those who have recently trusted Christ as their Savior. If you are that person, I have written this for you. Now that you are a Christian, the next logical question might be, "What's next?" or "How do I live the Christian life?" How these questions are answered are crucial to what you do next as a new Christian.

Another reason I am writing this booklet is that I don't want you to get off to the wrong start that I did when I started my new Christian journey at age 18. I say this because the answer to my "What's next?" question was the wrong answer. I discovered the right answer to that question 30 years later at age 48. To insure that you don't follow the same path, I will show you key truths from the Bible that I have learned will answer your "What's next?" question.

This will start you on the journey that God intends for you. It is a journey of hope, freedom, healing, and a changed life. Jesus calls the Christian life an "abundant" life and it truly can be as you learn the foundational truths for living the Christian life.

My prayer is that you will see and understand the Biblical truths that I will be sharing and begin a journey that will, at some point, change you and persuade you of how much God loves you.



Bill Loveless is the director of Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM). CILM is a non-profit, non-denominational ministry that focuses on discipleship. We teach Christians that Christ is our only Source for living the Christian life and what it looks like to be transformed into Christ-likeness.

For further information, see the ministry website at: www.christislifeministries.com

