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HCCL

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**Anchors for the storm #8**

# **Christian Living**

**Anchors for the storm:** Key truths that anchor us to Christ, help us navigate life and enable us to glorify the Lord.

Good morning! Welcome to Harvest! I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

## **Introduction:**

Some people have this idea that the Christian Life is only about church attendance, lighting candles, going to conferences, reading the Bible, serving the poor, prayer journaling, ect... It does involve some of those things, but it is not only about those things. God gave his creation to his people to be **explored, enjoyed and experienced.**

So, I want to offer you 3 ways to view the Christian life, from the Bible and through what we at HCCL believe God says the Christian life looks like.

The Christian Life is intended by God to be:

### **#1 Explored**

**What the Christian life is NOT** = it is NOT a Christian life if you are NOT Born Again by the Holy Spirit through God's gift of faith, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Simply because you are a "moral" person, meaning you try to live life not breaking the law, not being cruel to others, not stealing other people's things, not lying about your self to make your self look good before them, not obsessively focus on fashion, and face - these things may be good, but they do not make a "Christian Life"!

**Ezekiel 33:10-11 (ESV)** says, 10 "And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: 'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them.

**How then can we live?"** 11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that **the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?"**

God not only expects his people to believe right things but also to conduct themselves in right ways!

Or, as the KJV puts it, **"How should we then live?"** We are called to explore and then live out what we discover to be true and right. "Turning from evil is right! Turning from a life that leads to death, is right! Turning to God, is right!"

**A truly Christian Life "explores" the question:** "What does God expect from those who claim to have faith in Jesus Christ? How ought they live in a world that is hostile to their faith, while at the same time their own human desires and internal conflicts seem to clash against the faith they hold so dear?"

- Growing in grace is learning (exploring) how to live the Christian life.
- Growing in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is learning (exploring) what Jesus is and who he is.
- Growing in the Christian Life is taking that knowledge and learning (exploring) how to live (apply it) in ways that please him.

**Pastor John McArthur**, once said to his church, “There is a popular thing to say, “I have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ”, but there is a real disconnect when you say, “I have a personal relationship with Jesus, but have no personal relationship with his church.”<sup>1</sup>

Disconnects like this are wrong, they are not Christian norms! What is normal and leads to a spiritually flourishing Christian Life is the Spirit’s urging me to gather together with my brothers and sisters in Christ to worship God together. Claiming to have faith in Jesus, but avoiding congregational worship is not “Normal” Christian Life, it is not God’s will or expectation.

The Bible says, in **Colossians 1:13-14** (ESV) 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. God made this truth my reality!

Our church, as part of the EFCA, aligns itself with fellow churches united around this belief about the Christian Life:

#### #8 Christian Living

*We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.*

It begins with a changed heart/mind!

**We believe that:**

It begins in people who have heard, received and responded to God’s word (**Romans 10:8-13,17**).<sup>2</sup> They then explored God’s word to answer questions like:

- Why do I struggle with sin? Oh, its because my nature is to rebel.
- How do I overcome my nature to rebel? Oh, the Bible tells me I can’t do that alone! Only Jesus can make that possible!
- I need God’s justifying grace and His sanctifying power and purpose, be actively taking place in my life, daily, moment by moment, breath by breath.

A truly Christian life can only be lived out by truly Christian people, people who have been redeemed and set apart for God’s kingdom. **Matthew 7:17-20** (ESV) 17 So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. 18 A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTreWU-xXrU>

<sup>2</sup> See also: Matt. 7:17-18; 12:33, 35; Heb. 11:6; Eph. 2:10; 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17, 23; 2 Thess. 2:13; 5:23; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 5:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Tit. 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 6:11, 14; 1 Pet. 1:15; Phil. 2:12-13; Heb. 12:1, 14; Rom. 6; 2 Tim. 1:9; Js. 2:17; 1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Pet. 1:3-11)

**Exploration** is just another way of saying **2 Peter 3:18** (ESV) 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

If you are worried that this is NOT you, that you do not and have never enjoyed this exploration, then I invite you right now to turn from your evil ways (which includes all forms of self-centeredness - sin) and turn to God. Why die pursuing a hopeless life only to die in hopelessness? Come to Christ, turn to God, seek him and he will be found. Ask him to save you from darkness and death, that he may have mercy on you and give you light and life. He loves you and the evidence of that love is the giving of his Son, Jesus Christ, who willingly died in your place on the cross, to make you right with God, a friend, not an enemy. You deserved that cross, just like I did, but God's grace was extended to all who will trust in him, rescuing them from eternal death. Jesus overcame death, proved by his resurrection from the dead. His life and righteousness belong to all who trust and believe and live for him.

**Acts 16:31** (ESV) "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

**Philippians 1:6** (ESV) 6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

The Christian Life is intended by God to be:

## #2 Enjoyed

We believe that those who are justified and redeemed seek to:

### a) Love God supremely is a joy not a burden

**Deuteronomy 6:5-6** (ESV) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

**1 Peter 1:8-9** (ESV) Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

### b) Love others sacrificially, (Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:37-39; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27)

This is not always fun. However, there is a joy in Christ that motivates our faith and compassion toward one another, especially the poor, and seeking justice for the oppressed.<sup>3</sup>

**1 Thessalonians 5:14-18** (ESV) 14 And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. 15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 16 **Rejoice always**, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

There is joy in giving, as you love God and serve others for their benefit. There is joy in loving God as he intends, even when life is hard. There is joy to be experience in the everyday goodness of God, in creation and in a that reflects Jesus. May God give us the grace to look for that goodness, to know his good work is taking place, despite what our eyes may see and our ears may hear.

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<sup>3</sup> (One another - Rom. 12:10; 14:13; 15:7, 14; Gal. 5:26; Eph. 4:32; 1 Thess. 3:12; 5:11, 15; Heb. 10:24-25; 1 Pet. 4:9), (The poor - Dt. 15:11; Psa. 82:3,4; Psa. 140:12; Prov. 14:21,31; 19:17; 22:9,16,22,23; 28:8; 29:7; 31:8,9; Jer. 22:16; Gal. 2:10; Js. 1:27) (Justice for the oppressed -Ex. 23:6; Lev. 19:15; Psa. 82:3,4; 140:12; Prov. 29:7; 31:9; Isa. 1:17; Jer. 9:24; Mic. 6:8; Zech. 7:9,10; Matt. 23:23; Luke 4:18).

## **The Christian Life is intended by God to be:**

### **#3 Experienced**

The Christian Life is not just about theology, spirituality, or philosophy. It is not only “religious” or about “religious things,” we called to live “out” the Christian Life:

- By God’s word, By the Spirit’s power, In fervent prayer

The Christian life is a life of practice, of experience, and engagement in God’s goodness and his commands. It is equally significant before God to enjoy a sunset on a lake in July, and bless his name for it, as it is to stand before a congregation and Read God’s word for their spiritual enrichment. Both of the these things are “Normal” Christian Life experiences.

Paul wrote to young pastor Timothy in **1 Timothy 4:13** (ESV) saying, “13 Until I come, **devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture**, to exhortation, to teaching.” Christian responsibility is to be a joy and shared experience, for the benefit of all who encounter such a blessing.

**We also need to be ready to experience the call to spiritual warfare.** Like soldiers on constant alert. We put on God’s armor, pick up the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit (the Bible) and we pray. This is not done just in our hearts, but from our hearts and through our lips. (Fervent prayer, Eph 6:10-18; (We, God’s people, Heb 3:13; 10:25). We enter the battle field against an unseen enemy - 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:11, 12; 2 Tim. 4:7; 1 Jn.5:3-4.

We believe the Christian life includes obedience to serve, to make disciples, to bear witness to the Gospel in both word and deed. (Matt 28:19; 5:13-16; John 20:21; Revelation 7:9; Acts 1:8)

**Acts 1:8 (ESV)** 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

We are not perfect people, we are a redeemed people, called to live a God centered, Christ magnifying, grace filled, joyful life - a “Real Life, a Christian Life”! We live this life in the power of the Holy Spirit, not our strength, not our abilities, not even our desires, hopes or dreams. May God give us desires, dreams and hopes that align with his purposes.

**Let’s not give to God only half a sacrifice**, but a whole sacrifice, not just our spiritual salvation or spiritual future, but our present, our now, our wounds, our hurts, our hopes, our desires, our children, our jobs, our homes, our possessions...that is the Christian life, lived for Jesus. [see **Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)**]

**Psalms 72:18-19 (ESV)** “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does **wondrous things**. Blessed be his glorious name forever; may **the whole earth be filled with his glory!**  
Amen and Amen!

**May God cause your life to be filled with his power, his pleasure and his purpose so that your joy in him increases daily and all glory goes to him!**