

Working out my Christian Life

We can only begin working out our new lives when we understand what it is that we are supposed to do and what we need to do in order to please our new Master. Once we could please ourselves, but now we are to please Him.

Isaiah 55 v 8-9

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.

God says that one of us needs to change and He says *I change not!*

1 Samuel 15 v 29

Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

We are to present ourselves totally to Him, so that He can change us into His image; we are to become like He is.

Romans 12 v 1

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

True worship then is not something that we do on Sundays, but is a continuous process of attitude towards God, enabling Him to change us because we have surrendered our lives to Him. Our whole thought patterns have to be changed from the old way, the world's thoughts, to His thoughts.

Romans 12 v 2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Learning how to use our minds is something that will become our defence against the attack of the enemy, all the time satan is looking to see who is available for him to destroy.

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1 Peter 5 v 6-10

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

One of the main Kingdom principles is this - firstly we **see**, secondly we **enter in**. When you were saved you were first aware of God revealing the sin in your life and your need for him. The only way was to be right with God and that way was through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Way and the truth and the life. You had become aware of your great lack, but that was only the first step. In the event of a fire in the house you look for the door, the way out, just seeing it does not get you out of the house.

John 3 v 3

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Here Jesus speaks of seeing the Kingdom, but verse 5 says that we have to be baptised in water for forgiveness of sins and baptised by the Holy Spirit so that we can enter the Kingdom.

John 3 v 5

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The principle of seeing and entering never changes. Where change is to take place in your life, there will first be **seeing** and then **entering in**, first by revelation by the Holy Spirit and second by obedience, responding to the revelation. This is pleasing to God and is the secret of growth in your Christian life.

Entering in means to take up the Kingdom life with all its responsibilities; volunteering to be changed and to serve the King who called you. He will be faithful in His love and discipling of you, only we have to change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever - hallelujah!

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Do not think too highly of yourself or too lowly either, after all we are born initially as babes in Christ, not adults and we need time to grow. Our early diet is of milk, we still need to get our nappies changed! In the natural, if we are adults this can be a hard thing to take, it seems like all our previous years were wasted. This is not so because God is able to teach us very quickly if we respond to Him, but we do need to start from where we are.

From a young age children are expected to contribute to the work in the house, chores have to be done and whilst Mum is responsible, children are trained by helping and copying. Dad contributes in repairs, assisting Mum, makes decisions and is often the sole breadwinner. But as the children grow up there is a greater sharing and involvement in lending a hand about the house. Children are to be trained in how to live, older children teach younger children how to do certain things and so it is in the family of God, it's called discipling.

Matthew 28 v 19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...

The following are some areas that will help you in working out your Christian life.

Prayer

You need to pray to God for yourself and have some time alone with Him. But sometimes you may be so busy that you cannot find the time. You must make time, find out from God before the day starts what He would like you to do today. Your day will be a better one if He is involved. Go to bed thinking about and thanking Him, wake up rejoicing and enjoying Him through praise in songs and tongues, it makes a whole difference. Pray when you travel by car, train, bus, walking, even cycling. Talk to Him; that is what prayer is and as He puts thoughts, pictures, visions or verses in your mind you will get to know Him more and more. Speak and sing in tongues often, this will edify and build up the Spirit in you and you will discover the joy of the Lord. Many Christians are poor because they have not understood how powerful the new tongue that they have is.

The more you use any of God's gifts the more they grow and mature, which is quite the opposite of natural things which when used, will wear out. When you neglect to use them, they diminish. Pray when you do any mundane job, sing also, it builds you up and people will notice that you are joyful. Encourage yourself in God by speaking to yourself.

1 Corinthians 14 v 15

What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also.

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Time

Make good use of your time, plan times with those whom God has given to you to disciple, if it helps, use a diary. Allow yourself time to read His word, be sure that you understand what you read, ask if you don't understand, ask Him first. We all make time for that which is in our hearts to do. Put God first and He will give you an abundant life.

Care

Care for yourself, be clean and look after your health. Some are sick because of personal neglect, late nights, grubby habits, wrong thoughts, resentment or any works of the flesh. Watch what you eat and drink and the amounts that you consume. Treat others as you would like to be treated, forgive those that wrong you and pray for them. If you care for people, pray for them, be gentle with them, be truthful and above all be honest with love always as the foundation. Find someone you can disciple. Speak to others about Jesus, you do this by asking God to give you an opportunity, one not many, it is better to give one person enough time than a little time to many people. Pray believing God will provide an opportunity and don't worry about what you should say, rather listen to what people you meet have to say. Jesus was so concerned about caring for the people He met and that's how He wants us to be too.

John 21 v 15-17

So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.

Matthew 9 v 36

Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.

Remember, sheep beget sheep, not the shepherds, shepherds care for the sheep.

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Work

Colossians 3 v 22-25

Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Our work is not separate from our Christian life; it is a part of it. God uses this time to show you both yourself and others. The work place can be a place of persecution, remember when Peter denied Jesus prior to the crucifixion? He was embarrassed and afraid; we are in good company when we feel this way. The follower of God looks for ways of overcoming this problem. In your work be diligent, create a good impression in the natural, do your work happily as unto the Lord and He will send people to you to inquire why it is that you are different. Be faithful in this part of your life and God will bless you in other areas.

Money

Tithing was an Old Testament covenant which is still used by many today. Under the new covenant however, more than one tenth is required, sometimes all is necessary, all being under the operative word to all giving. Are we that keen to serve Him with everything? The fact of the matter is that money is the one area where we can find out about our holiness and obedience towards God.

If sheep are not fleeced they roll over because of the weight of wool and are unable to get up to feed themselves and they die. We are also in danger of spiritual death if we are mean with our money.

Malachi 3 v 10

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

God blesses us when we give; we are poorer when we do not give than when we do. Sensitive giving is more in line with the new covenant but it's not an excuse not to give on a regular basis. The home receives income in order to pay the bills; the Church also requires the same commitment by the members of its family.

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2 Corinthians 9 v 6-7

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Acts 20 v 35

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

Some people find it easy to give and some have difficulty, some folk find receiving hard, we all have areas that we need help with. Similarly, whatever gifts the Holy Spirit has given you it is for serving others. As you operate your gift so it grows, if you ignore it then it will decrease. Jesus had some hard words to say about this.

Matthew 25 v 18-30

But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. "Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' "And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' "For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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Our gifts are for edifying the body of Christ, one another. We are gifts as people and we belong to one another. You are God's gift to the Church in the proper sense, use what you have and let it be a blessing to others; this is your reasonable service to God.

Principles of Building

The scriptures are given to us for our use in serving Him.

2 Timothy 3 v 16

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...

Ephesians 2 v 19-20

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone...

Jesus showed us the way, His life in the Gospels is an inspiration to us, and He is now sitting at the right hand of God awaiting His church to complete their preparation time as His bride. We are to become a prophetic people, bringing His rule and authority to bear on the forces of darkness.

Psalm 110

The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet." The Lord will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, "Rule in the midst of Your enemies." Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations, He will fill them with corpses, He will shatter the chief men over a broad country. He will drink from the brook by the wayside; Therefore He will lift up His head.

Revelation 19 v 8

It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

The above scripture in Revelation explains exactly what we are given to do so that we will become truly a bride prepared for encounters.

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The Royal Proclamation

The restoration of the temple as in Ezra chapters 1-6 lays down real life principles of how the church is to be built, a summary follows.

King Cyrus of Persia and the prophets Haggai and Zechariah bring the word to the people. The people respond and give themselves and their possessions. This obedience causes them to feel great joy because nothing fulfills man more than worshipping his God. God poured out His blessings on the work. Success brought attack, attack from satan. It hindered the work but it restarted when once again a prophet, Ezra brought God's word (Ezra 5). The promise to us is in the Psalms.

Psalm 127 v 1

Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain.

There is only one way, God's way. This, then is our responsibility, we are part of God's strategy, each one of us the member of a great army with one goal in mind, to be more than conquerors for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He has no other means than us, He has chosen us to rule and defeat the works of satan. These works take place in our own lives and outside in the world. We shall take dominion over evil; we shall wear fine linen, unlike the high priest Joshua.

Zechariah 3 v 3-6

Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, "Remove the filthy garments from him." Again he said to him, "See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes." Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the Lord was standing by. And the angel of the Lord admonished Joshua, saying, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'If you will walk in My ways and if you will perform My service, then you will also govern My house and also have charge of My courts, and I will grant you free access among these who are standing here.

Joshua had been clothed in filthy garments having believed the lies of satan, but God dressed him in clean robes. Because of Jesus and our position as citizens we can wear clean clothes as we live a life of obedience to Him.

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Restoring Dry Bones

Not only may we live the life, but as we develop our relationship with God through Christ Jesus, we will be able to prophecy to many dry bones as did the prophet in Ezekiel 37. God having already spoken to the people of Israel as to why He was saving them in chapter 36, goes on to say that He is building an exceeding great army - it comes out quite simply - Ezekiel prophesies to the dry bones (a picture of the church and a world without life) and there is a noise, a rattling and a shaking and the bones come together. At the same time sinews and flesh grew on the bones and the breath of the Spirit brought life into them. Here then is a spiritual principle, we are to prophecy to the dead, to bring to life those who are dead and dried up, both in the church and to the outside world and we are to be rivers of living water in an arid society. Ezekiel's secret was that at the outset he had a relationship with God and secondly, he allowed God to have the first and the last word. Finally he obeyed the word of God absolutely, not looking at things as they appeared; he spoke words of life, resurrected life into a dead situation.

You may argue that this was a special dispensation to Ezekiel and so it was, but we live in times of the new covenant, all of us are to know Him, relate to Him and serve Him.

Jeremiah 31 v 27-34

"Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and with the seed of beast. As I have watched over them to pluck up, to break down, to overthrow, to destroy and to bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the Lord. "In those days they will not say again, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge.' But everyone will die for his own iniquity; each man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth will be set on edge. "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

1 Corinthians 14 v 5

Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

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1 Corinthians 14 v 31

For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted...

What Paul teaches in the preceding Corinthian scriptures we can do by simply hearing and doing the things that God has willed for those who believe. Jesus said that signs would follow those who believe.

Mark 16 v 17

These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues...

Our attitude of gratitude for these promises will give us a lot of latitude! We will get what we believe God for, rather than what we think we deserve. We deserve nothing yet His grace gives us all that we need to live an abundant, Godly life.

I Knew You Before....

Jeremiah 1 v 4-10

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." Then I said, "Alas, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, Because I am a youth." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' Because everywhere I send you, you shall go, And all that I command you, you shall speak. "Do not be afraid of them, For I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord. Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. "See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, To pluck up and to break down, To destroy and to overthrow, To build and to plant."

Jeremiah is typical of the kind of people that God chooses to serve Him. The preceding scripture expresses something of the problem that we often have with God's promises and His requirement of us. Jeremiah took a very natural line about his appointment and we often do too. He may not have heard or worshipped God before, but God knew him before the foundation of the world and he knows you and me too! Do you believe it? The life of Jeremiah was not easy, he did commit himself to the tasks that God set for him and even when he was in prison he still listened to and went about God's business. Should we do less?

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Ephesians 1 v 3-4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

These notes form just a small part of the foundational things that we have to understand and practice as Christians. May the Lord cause these things to become real to you and be formed in your life.

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