

What The Bible Says About

The Christian Life And How To Live It



Living Together In The Love Of God

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Focal Philippians 2:12-13 (KJV)

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure.



What does it mean to be "Christian"? Is it no more than a personal belief system? _____

When you ask the average person in America "What faith, if any, are you?" 9 out of 10 people will say "I'm Christian". But what do they mean by that statement? When someone says "I'm a Christian" what they are talking about is a personal belief system or a set of doctrines which *may* or *may not* effect how you live out your life.

Nothing emphasizes this more than the ongoing war the media has with **Tim Tebow**. Tebow, who if the doctors had their way would have been aborted *for the sake of the mother*, is the **Denver Broncos Starting Quarterback**. An excellent player, what the media most focuses on is that Tim is *very clearly a Christian*.

- Tim made it a habit to write references the Biblical Verses on his eye black while playing college football. In 2010 the NCAA *banned messages on eye paint*, and the media quickly picked up on this and called it "**The Tebow Rule**".

- Tim's actions on the field have influenced the English language. The *Global Language Monitor* recognizes "**Tebowing**" as a word. When Tim makes a touchdown rather than dance and grab his crotch as most NFL players do, he *takes a knee in prayer, thanking the Lord and glorifying God.*



This is "**Tebowing**" - **and other athletes are starting to follow suit.** The *New York Times* wrote "**it can be hard to tell whether [people tebowing] are celebrating or mocking [Tebow] for his virtuous ways**".

- When the **New York Jets' "Broadway Joe" Namath** partied hard with blondes on both arms in late-night haunts the media chuckled. *USA Today* wrote an article called "**Who Are The 25 'coolest' Athletes of All Time?**" In the article **Raider's Quarterback Ken Stabler** - a man who said that he studied the Raiders' playbook by the light of the jukebox in Oakland honky-tonks - made the cut. **Jim McMahon of the Chicago Bears** mooned a helicopter during a Super Bowl practice. No one cared about any of this, but just said "Boys will be boys". Tim Tebow however has suffered from either outright mocking and scorn to patronizing statements from former team members. Former Broncos Quarterback **Jake Plummer** said "**I wish he'd just shut up after a game and go hug his teammates, I think he's a winner and I respect**

that about him. ... I think that when he accepts the fact that we know that he loves Jesus Christ then I think I'll like him a little better. I don't hate him because of that, I just would rather not have to hear that every single time he takes a good snap or makes a good hand-off."



The world looks at Tim Tebow as a fanatic - but Tebow is just a Christian.

Five things are true of the Christian. The Christian is a person who has (a) heard the Gospel message, (b) believed the Gospel message, (c) received the God of the Gospel message, (d) has been changed by the Gospel message, and (e) is being changed by the Gospel message.

1 A Christian is a person who has *heard, believed, and received the Gospel message.* You can *hear* something but not believe it. You can *believe* something but not receive it. All three of these states have to be true for you to be a Christian. Jesus illustrated this very clearly in His **parable of the Sower.** The Lord said:



Luke 8:5-8 (HCSB) "A sower went out to sow his seed. As he was sowing, some fell along the path; it was trampled

on, and the birds of the sky ate it up. 6 Other seed fell on the rock; when it sprang up, it withered, since it lacked moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns; the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. 8 Still other seed fell on good ground; when it sprang up, it produced a crop: 100 times what was sown.” ...

When the disciples asked Jesus what the parable meant, the Lord said:

Luke 8:11-15 ^(HCSB) “... The **seed is the word of God.** 12 The seed along the path are those who have heard and then the Devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the seed on the rock are those who, when they hear, welcome the word with joy. Having no root, these believe for a while and depart in a time of testing. 14 As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature fruit. 15 But the seed in the good ground — these are the ones who, having heard the word with an honest and good heart, hold on to it and by enduring, bear fruit.

The Gospel Seed is the Word of God. The Word of God tells us that "**Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God**" (Romans 10:17). The Word of God tells us that "**all are sinners, and fall short of satisfying God**" (Romans 3:23). The Word of God tells us that "**Christ died for our sins as God said He would, and rose again to offer us life**" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The Word of God tells us that we "**must repent**

- turn away from our current way of life - and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our only Savior" (John 1:12). Jesus tells us in the parable that there are *four different conditions* that can exist when the Gospel:

a (verses 5 & 12) ... some Gospel Seed fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the sky {Symbolic of Satan} ate it up.

The reason that the Gospel makes no difference in the life is because *the person who hears the Word is unbroken, hard soil.*



Just as it is with seed scattered on hard ground, the birds will come and eat the seed so that it never grows. When the Gospel is shared to unbroken persons **the devil will come along and steal the seed.** He will whisper, "**This is a stupid message! How can a Jew die for your sins? Who is to say you're a sinner anyway? How dare anyone judge you? There are worst people than you!**" The seed is eaten up by the devil - and has no effect on the life. The field is still dead!

b (verses 6 & 13) ... some Gospel seed fell on the rock; when it sprang up, it withered, since it lacked moisture. Jesus said that these are those who, again, are unbroken, but **hear and welcome the Word with joy.** But receiving the Gospel in an unbroken state the ground of their life resists the seed bearing deep roots. It creates



a plant with a shallow root system that cannot draw water from the soil.

When bad times come - and they come to all - these depart when tested, run from God and run to other things to put their faith in when the trials of life hit. They run to doctors. They run to hospitals. They run to faith

healers. They run to banks. They do not do as the Scripture says:

Psalms 27:14 ^(HCSB) **Wait for the LORD; be strong and courageous. Wait for the LORD.**

Their trust is not in the Lord but in the *promise of the Lord*. Their trust is not in the Lord but *in the Church of the Lord, or the preacher of the Lord, or the parent who trusted the Lord*.

Isaiah 40:31 ^(HCSB) **but those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint.**

C (verses 7 & 14) some Gospel seed fell among thorns; the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. Jesus said that these "thorns" are the "worries, riches, and pleasures of life". Again, though the good seed was sown and the Gospel clearly presented, these people hear the Word but go on their way, never receiving it. There is no repentance, and no broken

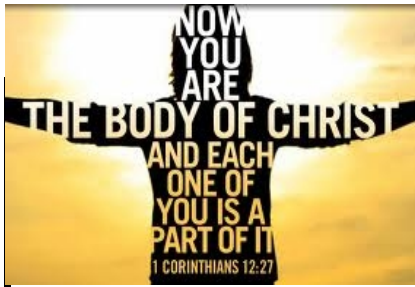
ground. An unbroken life cannot receive the Gospel and cannot be saved.

d But then Jesus said **some Gospel seed fell on good ground; when it sprang up, it produced a crop: 100 times what was sown.** What is the "good ground"? It is ground that is broken up, devoid of weeds and briars, yielded to the sower and yielded to the seed. **Good ground is softened by the adversity of the plow.** The Gospel seed is received by the ground, consumed by the ground, enveloped by the ground. It goes deep into the life of the saved person. Listen Beloved! Jesus said **the seed produced a crop 100 times what was sown.** Application? Salvation is freely given by God. We do not produce the Gospel Seed - God did. He casts the seed through other believers who have received the seed.

Salvation is extended by a free act of God's Grace. We did not and cannot do anything to earn it. To be saved we receive the Word of God in broken soil. We receive Jesus.

John 1:11-14 ^(KJV) {The Word - Jesus} **came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**

We are saved by *receiving Jesus*. Jesus Christ is the Gospel. The early Church understood this. Like Tim Tebow, the early Christians were *mocked* for their faith. The Bible says that **after the Deacon Stephen was stoned to death** the Church was scattered as far as **Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch (Acts 11:19)**. These believers **sowed the seed of the Gospel only to the Jews**. However other believers **came to Antioch, and sowed the Gospel seed to the Greek people - the Gentiles (Acts 11:20)**.



The dispersed followers of Christ shared the Gospel Seed a revival started in Antioch, and the *unbelievers mocked*

these believers calling them "**Christian**" or "**Little Christs**". The word "**Christian**" means "**Little Christ**"!

God is the Gospel! Christ is the Gospel! When you **receive Jesus Christ** - when He is planted in your life by faith - then you have life. Jesus Christ lives in and through His people. We are born into His Kingdom when we - broken and undone - believe on Him. He is the Seed, the Gospel planted in us.

We who are Christians are "**little Christs**". God is at work in us, forming Christ in us, making us like His Beloved Son. It was not God's intent to save us so that we can be more like a son of Adam. It is God's intent after our salvation **to make us like a Son of God, to**

make us like Jesus!

2 The Christian way of life is lived by *drawing near to Christ*. We cling to the Living Word and His Written Word. We do as Jesus says *if we are saved*, one step at a time as our Lord commands. There's a little poem that says:

**By myself I cannot do,
But God never said I could.
Yet I can do all things through Christ,
Through me God said He would.**

a We live the Christian life by letting Christ work through us. Jesus said of all believers:

John 15:5 ^(HCSB) **"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me.**

The difference between the **believer** and the **unbeliever** are stark. The **unbeliever** looks at life and says "**What shall I do?**" The **believer** looks at life and says "**What does Christ want me to do?**"



We who are saved are *works in progress* - and we trust our Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-10 ^(HCSB) **For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from**

yourselves; it is God's gift — 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.

but saved by faith God created us IN CHRIST FOR GOOD WORKS. We are to be like Jesus. We are to be little Christs!

b We are to be like little Christs in our LOVE. We read earlier ...

Focal Philippians 2:12 ^(KJV) Wherefore, my beloved ...

The word "Beloved" means "Those worthy of love". We are worthy of love because Christ has made us worthy of love. We are worthy of love because Jesus Christ is inside us, in our hearts by faith. But it is not just I who am worthy of love. My fellow believers are worthy of love. The Apostle wrote:

Context Philippians 2:1-4 ^(KJV) If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love,



[being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

I am to consider you *worthy of love* for Christ's sake. God is forming Christ in you just as He is forming Christ in me. It dishonors God when the Christian Church has **strife** within it.

Jesus Christ loved me so much that He laid His life down for me. He planted Himself in my life, and the Bible says

Romans 8:28-29 ^(HCSB) We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God: those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers.

that we are *together* people of purpose. God has purposed that we will be conformed to the image of His dear Son. We will be like little Christs. I disrespect God and His process of creation in you if I have **strife or jealousy over you**. God is working in you - little Christ - as He is working in me a little Christ. As a little Christ I am to esteem you better than I. I am to lift you up in love, not put myself over you.

C We are to be like little Christs in our OBEDIENCE to God. We don't just obey when others

are watching us, but obey the Lord *always and at all times.*

Focal **Philippians 2:12** ^(KJV)
Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence



As Jesus Christ was obedient to the Father, we are to be obedient to the Father. We are not called to be *Sunday Only Christians*, but daily Christian. The Bible says:

Context **Philippians 2:5-8** ^(KJV) **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Jesus Christ - though Eternal God in human form - **lowered Himself in love.** He did what was necessary in order to save us from hellfire and damnation.

Jesus Christ died to Himself so that we could have eternal life. We who are little Christs are called to die *to ourselves* so that others can have life.

We die to our pride, and endure the mocking of the world in order to lift up Christ. We sow the Gospel seed

though 3 times out of 4 it lands on unproductive soil. The world goes in one direction, saying "This is what is normal", but we who are born of God walk in obedience to His Word. We are **not just obedient when in Church or when the preacher is watching us** - but we obey God to the best of our ability where ever we are.

d We are to be like little Christs in our "**WORK OUT**". The Apostle said:

Focal **Philippians 2:12** ^(KJV) **... work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

Many people have misunderstood and therefore misapplied this Scripture. It does not say "**work for your own salvation**". Salvation is not something you can work for. The Bible says that **salvation is a gift from God.** We don't work for the Gospel Seed. The Scripture says:

John 3:16 ^(KJV) **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.**

God gave His Son to be our Savior. The Scripture says that we who are saved are saved because of what Jesus Christ did.

Hebrews 10:10-14 ^(HCSB) **By this will of God, we have been sanctified (- set apart for God's purpose) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all. {Who} after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. For by**

one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

We are saved because God gave His Son. We are saved because we believed that God gave His Son. We are saved because we have received this God given Son. We are saved because God is at work in us.

That's what the Scripture says:

Titus 3:5 ^(HCSB) **He saved us — not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy, through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.**

What does it mean to "work out" your salvation? _____

He saved us. So, what does it mean to **"work out your own salvation"**? **It means to exercise, to put into practice, to do so as others can see it.** To "work out" your salvation means to *not keep it to yourself, but to use it in the world.*

When Christ came to the world, He didn't just sit in the Temple quietly minding His own business. He **worked the works of God**. Jesus **went out**. He went out to John the Baptist and said



"Baptize Me". He went out and told others about the Gospel. Jesus was vocal, He stood up, and stood against injustice and religious foolishness. Jesus said **"he that has seen Me has seen the Father"** (John 14:9).

As Jesus lived His faith without complaining, we are to live our faith without complaining. **Exercise your faith. Do what God says!** We read:

Context **Philippians 2:14-16** ^(KJV) **Do all things without murmurings and disputings: 15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; 16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.**

When each Christian learns to walk as little Christs, **loving one another and loving our neighbor, we will change our world.** We will make no impact on our culture while we look like our culture. We must **shine as lights**, exercising our faith clearly and without shame.

The world needs to see us - not as Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Pentecostals, Catholics, or any other denomination. The world needs to see us as little Christs. **Work out your faith.** If you don't, our world will fall.



3 What are some things I can do to "work out" my

faith? Here are a few practical suggestions:

a If you see a need, don't complain or murmur about it. Rather ask the Lord "What can I do to satisfy this need?" - and then **DO IT**. Be positive, and *work out* your faith. The Bible says that:



1 Corinthians 12:13-14 ^(HCSB) For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. 14 So the body is not one part but many.

If the Body - the Church - is limping along, what can you do to stabilize it? You are important, and are here for a reason. **Work out your OWN salvation**. Look for opportunities to serve and do it.

b Be an encourager to others around you. The Bible says:

Context **Philippians 2:4** ^(HCSB) Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

That doesn't mean I'm supposed to be a busybody with my nose in your business. It means that I should *encourage and uplift you* as you pursue your calling in the Lord.

Hebrews 3:13 ^(HCSB) But encourage each other daily,

while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

C Take time daily to read the Word of God, and gather frequently with other brothers and sisters to hear the Word. You cannot imitate the Living Word without having the Written Word in your hearts. **Adrian Rogers** wrote in his book *What Every Christian Ought To Know*:

"How does God speak? You're reading the Bible or you're praying and God puts that portion in your heart. God says, "This is from Me. It is all true, but this is specially from Me to you". You say, "Well, He never speaks to me that way." Are you listening? Do you have a quiet time? Are you saturated with the Word of God? Are you ready to do His will? Do you want to hear Him? Are you reporting for duty?"

d When you stumble, confess your failure to the Lord, pick yourself up, and move on in your faith. The Bible says:

1 John 1:8-9 ^(KJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us [our] sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

We all fail, and all sin. We are works in progress. But remember, **God has foreordained that we will be like Jesus**. Keep on looking up, and keep on being light. **If you have offended other Christians, go to them and**

apologize. Do not contribute to disunity in the Body of Christ. The Lord said:

Matthew 5:23-24 ^(HCSB) **So if you are offering your gift on the altar, and there you remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

e Always bear in mind that **GOD IS THE GOSPEL.**

God came to earth for all. God died for all. God rose again for all. All are undeserving, but all are offered salvation. Neither I nor you are any better than anyone else, but we are saved by receiving Christ.

A dry eyed Church and an apathetic Christian will make no difference to a hell bound America.

God loves all and has proven His love by planting Himself in our lives. He is the Gospel. Tell others what God did for you, and what He will do for them if they will only believe. God is the Gospel, and the Gospel - when presented - changes everything.

