

“BEING A CHRISTIAN”

Colossians 3:12-17

We talk a lot about **BECOMING A CHRISTIAN**. A Christian is rescued from the domain of darkness, transferred to the eternal kingdom of Jesus, redeemed from the bondage of sin, and forgiven for all their sins. This qualifies the believer for a spiritual inheritance which is reserved for them in heaven—*an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away*. Every Christian should relentlessly thank God the Father for the blessing of salvation.

Today, I want to focus our attention on **BEING A CHRISTIAN**. As Paul put it in his letter to Titus, this is the ongoing challenge...

“to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:12).

Keep this in mind. Every believer has at their fingertips the fullness of our Lord’s divine life,

power, wisdom, and victory. Here's the challenge we face...

BE A CHRISTIAN!

BEING A CHRISTIAN is characterized by...

1. A PURSUIT OF HOLINESS

Jesus died on the cross for our sins and He was raised from the dead so that we might experience newness of life in Him.

Colossians 3:5-8...Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.

God takes sin seriously. His eyes are too pure to approve evil in the lives of unbelievers and in the lives of believers. In Christ, you have the power to crush these sins. By faith, you must

consider the members of your earthly body as dead to these things. Don't just become a Christian...

BE A CHRISTIAN!

BEING A CHRISTIAN is characterized by a *pursuit of holiness*. It also characterized by...

2. A PROCESS OF RENEWAL

Colossians 3:9–11...*Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil practices*, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— 11 *a renewal* in which there is *no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.**

Do you see the emphasis on renewal in these verses? Metaphorically speaking, being a Christian means we change clothes. In Christ every believer has...

- a new position
- a new power
- a new passion
- a new priority
- a new purpose
- a new prospect

The ultimate goal of this renewal process is for the one who has become a Christian to...

BE A CHRISTIAN!

BEING A CHRISTIAN is characterized by a pursuit of holiness and a process of renewal.

Next, it is characterized by...

3. A HEART FOR PEOPLE

Colossians 3:12... So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

“Kindness”—This word was used in the Greek language to describe wine which had grown mellow with age and had lost its harshness. Being a Christian means that you are considerate of the feelings of others.

“Gentleness”—This word means *power under control*. The motto of a gentle and humble person is—“*YOU BEFORE ME.*”

“And patience”—This word literally means *long tempered*.

Do you see the verb there in verse 12—“put on?” It is a command, not a suggestion. These characteristics of grace should be lived out in the laboratory of life—*in the dorm, in the classroom, in the locker room, in the workplace, in the church, and in the home!*

BE A CHRISTIAN!

BEING A CHRISTIAN is characterized by a pursuit of holiness , a process of renewal, and a heart for people. It is also characterized by...

4. A READINESS TO FORGIVE

Colossians 3:13...**bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.**

“Bearing with one another”—This means “*to uphold and to encourage*” someone even when they fail to do what we expect them to do.

“And forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone”—One author puts it this way...

Forgiveness is surrendering my right to hurt you for hurting me. (Archibald Hart, quoted in James Dobson, *Love Must Be Tough*.)

“Just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you”—Why should we forgive people who hurt us? It is because Jesus forgave us when we didn’t deserve it! This is what it means to...

BE A CHRISTIAN!

BEING A CHRISTIAN is characterized by *a pursuit of holiness*, *a process of renewal*, and *a heart for people*, and *a readiness to forgive*.
Next, it is characterized by...

5. A PATTERN OF LOVE

Colossians 3:14...Beyond all these things *put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*

The word “**love**” refers to God’s unconditional love (*agape*)—a love that does what the person being loved needs and not necessarily what they want.

Okay, I understand. You’ve loved people and you got hurt. There’s a tendency to keep your guard up so you won’t get hurt again. Hold on now. This command can be translated...

“Keep putting on love over and over and over again.”

Love is the bow that adorns...

- The heart of compassion
- Kindness
- Humility
- Gentleness
- Patience
- Bearing with one another
- Forgiving each other

Jesus challenged his followers with this command...

John 13:34–35... “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Okay, you’ve become a Christian. Now is the time to...

BE A CHRISTIAN!

BEING A CHRISTIAN is characterized by a pursuit of holiness, a process of renewal, a heart for people, a readiness to forgive, and a pattern of love. Next, it is characterized by...

6. A FOCUS ON GRATITUDE

The influence of the Lord Jesus Christ on a true Christian is off the charts.

Colossians 3:15... Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

His peace rules in our hearts

The peace of Christ pictures harmony and mutual care and concern.

John 14:27... “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

Now, look at verse 16...

Colossians 3:16... Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

When believers are committed to the Lordship of Christ...

His Word richly dwells within us

The Word of God that fills our hearts becomes a treasury of wisdom to guide us as we face the varying circumstances of life and as we make big decisions. It leads us to worship God, and it fills us with a spirit of gratitude.

Colossians 3:17...Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Keep this in mind. **Who you are is determined by whose you are.** As a believer, you are “*in Christ.*” You belong to Him. You exist for His glory!

“Whatever you do in word or deed” is a comprehensive expression that involves everything in life including *your education, your career, your hobbies, your finances, your eating, your dating, your use of social media, your entertainment, your music, your shopping, your time management, etc.*

“Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” refers to “living in harmony with his revealed will, in subjection to his authority, and in dependence on his power.”¹

¹ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 307.

A focus on gratitude must be a vital aspect of our lives if we are going to glorify the Lord. G.K. Chesterton said...

When it comes to life, the critical thing is whether you take things for granted or take them with gratitude.

Paul refers to gratitude/thanksgiving 7 times in this epistle (**1:3, 1:12, 2:7, 3:15, 3:16, 3:17, 4:2**). Remember, Paul was a Roman prisoner when he wrote this letter. That makes this emphasis even more powerful.²

CONCLUSION

A.W. Tozer wrote...

“Millions of professed believers talk as if God were real and act as if He were not. Our actual position is always to be discovered by the way we act (live), not by the way we talk.”

² Warren W. Wiersbe, [*The Bible Exposition Commentary*](#), vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 141.

This message has been centered on **BEING A CHRISTIAN**. What does that mean? How does it work? It is characterized by a pursuit of holiness, a process of renewal, a heart for people, a readiness to forgive, a pattern of love, and a focus on gratitude. How do you measure up? Will you humble yourself at the altar this morning and seek the Lord's help in these areas?

If you try to be a Christian without first becoming a Christian, you will experience extreme frustration because this kind of life is only possible in Christ. Are you ready to **BECOME A CHRISTIAN**? Turn from your sins and place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ today.

BE A CHRISTIAN!