

Basic Christianity - The Changed life of the Christian | 7/10/16

- Christians must turn away from our former ignorance and live a life that reflects a true child of God.
 - When we become a child of God, there is a change that takes place in our hearts because of the Holy Spirit.
 - We became children when we were justified and received the Holy Spirit.
 - 1 John 1:12
 - “But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,”
 - We might ask ourselves so now that we are saved and have the Spirit of God living within us do we just live life just as we had before?
 - Was our salvation just a check box or life achievement that once obtained we forget about it.
 - The answer to this of course is no, we are forever changed after being saved.
 - We are no longer the same person, because before all we had was our sinful nature, God was not there. But when we became a Christian and were justified we received the promised Holy Spirit.
 - Now Christ lives within us, he has permanently changed us.
 - **So not only has our heart been changed but so should our thoughts and actions. Our fruit should be different.**
 - The Christian must embrace the Spirit of God living within them and live a life that He has called us to.
 - Christians are to maintain a life that reflects a true child of God.
 - 1 Peter 1:14-16
 - As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the One who called you is holy, **you also are to be holy in all your conduct;** for it is written, be holy, because I am holy.”
 - A child of God is a Christian that is different from the world, they are set apart by God to be Holy.
 - To be Holy is simply to be set apart. So God is a Holy God who is separate from the world and we Christians are called to also be Holy and set apart from the world.
 - **So when we live the Christian life we WILL look different.**
 - As obedient children, we are not to be conformed to the desires of our former ignorance.
 - This former ignorance is our life as a non-believer as a full-fledged sinner who does not have faith in Jesus Christ. It is one who has no knowledge of God.
 - Ephesians 2:12
 - “At that time you were **without the Messiah**, excluded from the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, **without hope and without God** in the world.”
 - We are not to look like this person anymore because we are now different, we are set apart by God and we have a relationship with him.
 - Ephesians 4:17-19
 - “Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: **You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk**, in the futility of their thoughts. **They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God**, because of the ignorance that is in them and because of the hardness of their hearts. They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.”

- This is a description of one who does not know God, who lives for themselves.
 - **A Christian should never “look” like they live a life excluded from God.**
 - If we continue to embrace our old self, then the world will see the same old person who lives for the world.
 - Instead the world should visibly see Christ reflected in us.
 - **Before Christ we were children under wrath because of our sin, but no longer we are now children of God. So there is a part of us that we must turn from.**
 - Ephesians 2:3
 - “We too all previously lived among them in **our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts**, and we were by nature **children under wrath** as the others were also.”
 - We must no longer carry out the desires of our flesh, they do not please God.
 - These fleshly desires will lead us to sin. They are actions or thoughts that God has called us to remove from our lives.
 - Galatians 5:19-21a
 - “Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar.”
 - These works of the flesh are desirable.
 - When we read this laundry list of works of the flesh we may cringe, but in reality our sinful nature desires these things.
 - Peter told us that the desires of our former ignorance (works of the flesh) are desirable.
 - “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the **desires of your former ignorance...**”
 - We are affected by them in different ways and not everyone produces the same sinful works but regardless of what we are susceptible to we are drawn to them.
 - **But God has called us to turn from them, to shun these sinful desires.**
 - 1 Peter 2:11
 - “Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and temporary residents to **abstain from fleshly desires that war against you.**
 - This list of sins are the works and the fruit of our sinful nature. However even being a Christian the selfish nature that is responsible for these works is still present.
 - But Christ has called us to turn away from them, because with the Holy Spirit we CAN turn from them.
- So practically what does this old-self look like that we are supposed to turn away from?
 - Selfishness
 - Live for personal gratification
 - One who lives to fulfill their personal gratification and goals. There isn’t much that one will not do to get what is best for them.
 - Help myself first and others second.
 - This is the opposite of what Jesus has taught us by his example. A Christian lives the life of humility and serving.
 - We give ourselves over to our passions and desires without regard for the will of God.
 - If I have a desire for something, then it must be OK.

- If I have a desire to sin of any kind and I want to do it then I have no trouble giving myself over to it.
 - If it feels good do it.
- Conforming to the world around us instead of the requirements of God.
 - God has given us the perfect example and model of how to live our lives, but if we live as our old self then we just fit in with the world.
 - If the world says that sin is OK, then we conform to that sin.
 - We desire to live and look like the lost who live for themselves.
 - The Christian needs to always conform to the image God even if that goes against what the world wants.
- Live for worldly possessions and fame.
 - To the lost perhaps the meaning of life would be who has the most money and is the most famous.
 - To obtain glory in the eyes of the world would be one's goal because whom else would one seek one's approval?
 - What will the history books say about me?
 - As a Christian however we know that to live a life that is Holy and obedient to God is to live one that seeks the approval of God and not the world.
 - One lives not for person gain of fame and fortune, but one seeks to build up rewards in Heaven and one that seeks to glorify God and not themselves.
- Sexual immorality
 - The sinful nature has no regard for God's commands or purpose for human sexuality.
 - The sinful nature says marriage does not matter and that promiscuity is great.
 - You can lust after whomever you want because "it feels good".
- Hatred, envy and greed
- These are all works of the sinful nature that as Christian we are supposed to turn away from.
- Scriptures tells us that it should not ever come from us, Christians must look and live differently from the world.
 - Ephesians 5:3
 - "But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed **should not even be heard of among you**, as is proper for saints."
 - Christianity does not give us a license to sin, we should dispose of this old lifestyle and live our new life in Christ.
 - **The Bible is CLEAR that a Christian must live differently.**
- **Why is it so important that a Christian no longer looks like the world?**
- **What is the root cause as to why a Christian might look like one who lives a life excluded from God?**
- **Can you look at a time in your life where you transitioned from a Christian that resembles the world, to one that resembles a child of God?**
- With the Holy Spirit we can now live a life that reflects the holiness and righteousness of God.
 - As Christians having the Holy Spirit we can now live the life that God has called us to live that is different from the world.
 - We must remove the old self with its corruption and put on the new self that is in the likeness of God.
 - Ephesians 4:22-24

- “You took off your former way of life, the old self that is corrupted by deceitful desires; you are being renewed in the spirit of your minds; **you put on the new self, the one created according to God’s likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.**”
- We are to be righteous and pure, not acting out the sins of the flesh.
- **This new self that we are supposed to embrace is one that is in the likeness of God. It is the self that reflects the character and glory of God.**
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18
 - “We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.”
 - **This must be the life that we portray as Christians to the world, they should see a reflection of God in all aspects of our lives.**
- **The Spirit gives us the DESIRE to obey and do the works of God.** God’s reflection from within us, will allow us to shine like stars in the world.
 - Philippians 2:12-15
 - “So then, my dear friends, just as you have **always obeyed**, not only in my presence, but now even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. **For it is God who is working in you, enabling you both to desire and to work out His good purpose.** Do everything without grumbling and arguing, so that you may be blameless and **pure, children of God who are faultless** in a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you **shine like stars in the world.**”
 - **This is the different life that Christians should be portraying to the world. We should stand out like pure white stars on the backdrop of a world of sin and darkness.**
 - **This does NOT mean that we are to have a holier than though attitude that the Pharisees had.**
 - **We are not only to believe and trust in Christ, but we are also to be obedient to His commandments. We must demonstrate God’s character through us by our actions within the world.**
 - With the Spirit we will not only desire to do His works but we will DO them.
 - Ephesians 5:1
 - “Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children.”
 - Ephesians 5:8-10
 - “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light—**for the fruit of the light results in all goodness, righteousness, and truth—discerning what is pleasing to the Lord.**”
 - Galatians 5:22-23a
 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control...”
 - **Is it easy to stand out in the world if we embrace the Spirit and live an obedient life to Christ?**
 - **Do you feel drawn to produce the fruit of the Spirit? Do you see this fruit as an obligation or do you genuinely desire to produce them?**
- So practically what does living this new life in the Spirit look like?

- There are many ways that we can describe living the Christian life, but perhaps one of the greatest is the love that is shown by the Christian.
- The love that is fruit of the spirit is unlike the love we are capable of on our own.
- The Spirit allows us to love others as we love ourselves.
 - Matthew 22:37-40
 - “He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - We may not think so but we all do love ourselves.
 - We care about our well-being, we want to be happy we want to have food and clothes etc.,
 - We are to take this same love and caring that we have for ourselves and to treat others the same way.
- Our love for Christians is proof that we are a disciple of Christ.
 - John 13:34-35
 - “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** for one another.”
 - How Christians treat one another has always been a witness to the world. Christian love has brought many to Christ.
- Our love has action through service.
 - **To love others requires action and not just something that we feel in our hearts**
 - 1 John 3:18
 - “Little children, we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action.”
 - **To truly walk in the light, we must love with action and our service.**
 - We can say that we love others or we love our fellow Christians, but if we see them in a time of need and we never raise a finger then we are not truly showing the love, our words are meaningless without action.
 - 1 John 3:17
 - “If anyone has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need but closes his eyes to his need—how can God’s love reside in him?”
 - James 2:15-17
 - “If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,” but you don’t give them what the body needs, what good is it?”
 - **To say we love someone is commendable, but action is where true love is proven.**
 - This is why Christians are always serving others. It is what Christ came to do and we are imitators of Him.
 - Matthew 20:28
 - “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.”
 - Matthew 25:37-40
 - This is seen quite clearly in history. Christians have always been the ones who have looked out for the least of these.
 - Christians provided burial for non-Christians in the first centuries after the resurrection of Christ.

- The earliest Christians went together and bought burial “property” in the catacombs. They made sure that even the non-Christians had a proper burial for their dead.
 - Christians were the ones that took care of the poor and the orphans.
 - Infanticide was widespread and the Christians who valued life would take them in.
 - Christians have founded numerous
 - Christians were the only ones who took care of the sick during the plague of the 3rd century. The pagans would throw out their family as to not catch it themselves.
 - Christians are the ones who have established the hospitals. So many have been started because of the Christian love for others.
 - Christians who embrace the Spirit will serve others with the love of Christ that stands out.
- When Christians live out their faith others can come to know Christ.
 - Not only does the actions of the Christian help others in the physical since, but also spiritually.
 - When Christian live out their Spirit filled lives others will give God the glory.
 - Matthew 5:14-16
 - “You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. **In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.**”
 - **Glory will be given to God when we are obedient to Him and we live in the Spirit and walk in the light.**