

Chapter 8 - CHRISTIAN WALK:

STANDING

BEFORE WE WALK

THE FOUNDATION FOR A CHRISTIAN LIFE

The term Christian life roughly refers to how we live as a believer. Our Christian life is vital to gain and know the fruit of the Holy Spirit, derived from obedience, as well as to serve our Savior who saved us ([Galatians 5:22-23](#); [Philippians 2:12](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#)).

Importantly, two preconditions exist to enjoy the Christian life. If you are unsure if you meet these conditions, please review Chapters 1-3 of [Know the Bible](#).

Precondition 1

SALVATION

Being saved by grace, having received the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ's death on the cross and resurrection to new life ([Ephesians 2:8-10](#); [Romans 3:21-26](#); [Romans 10:9](#)).

Precondition 2

ASSURANCE

Security of salvation, as we can only adequately live a fruitful Christian life when we are confident of our salvation ([1 Peter 1:4-5](#); [Romans 8:28-39](#)).

If a person does not believe in Christ for salvation, they do not have the understanding or capacity to live the Christian life (Romans 3:10-18). Further, if we are not convinced that God keeps our salvation, then we will not have the confidence to live as Christians and serve God.

Based on these two foundations, how does the Bible tell us to live the Christian life?

PROGRESSING FROM SALVATION

to live the Christian life - Hebrews 6:1-2

How do we then mature in our faith after salvation?

THREE SANCTIFICATIONS

Critical to understanding the Christian life are the three different sanctifications. These are defined in the Dallas Theological Seminary doctrinal [statement](#) and are very useful. Sanctification as a term is defined by our setting apart as holy to God.

- 1 FIRST OR PAST SANCTIFICATION**
This is legal holiness based on our forgiveness of sins by Christ's death on the cross through faith. We are created new beings in Christ who can serve him ([Romans 6:2-11](#); [Titus 3:5](#)).
- 2 SECOND OR PRESENT SANCTIFICATION**
This describes our actions, by which we become holy as we live a life of faith and obedience in our service to God throughout our lifetime ([Romans 6:12-16](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#); [1 Peter 1:15-16](#); [2 Peter 1:4-10](#)).
- 3 THIRD OR FUTURE SANCTIFICATION**
This is the change in our bodies at the rapture that becomes holy; completing the sanctification process ([1 Corinthians 15:49](#)).

Importantly, the three sanctifications are separate in implementation and do not mix.



THE TRANSITION FROM FIRST TO SECOND SANCTIFICATION

When Christ was resurrected to new life He then ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God the Father ([Hebrews 8:1](#)). This action signified that His glorious work in bringing salvation to man was finished. His sacrifice was sufficient for all sins for all time and did not need to be repeated ([Hebrews 10:10-19](#)). His sacrificial work being complete, Christ now heads continuously the church and helps believers in their Christian life.

Likewise, as Christians when we believe in salvation and receive forgiveness ([Romans 3:23-26](#)) it is once for all time. We also were resurrected to new life and sit at the right hand of God the Father with Christ ([Ephesians 2:4-9](#)). Consequently, our work of being saved is finished. We now serve Christ continuously through the church (second sanctification). We do not need to revisit our first sanctification.

So as Christ was resurrected to new life we also are resurrected to new life through Him ([Romans 6:2-9](#)). As Christ's saving work was finished on the cross, our process to salvation was finished at conversion. As newly regenerated people, we are now able and free to serve Him, unburdened with insecurities over the security of our salvation or if God may not accept us for some sin.

THE TRANSITION FROM THE SECOND TO THE THIRD SANCTIFICATION

When Christ comes again in the clouds to take his church home, our bodies will be changed instantaneously to a heavenly body (1 Thessalonians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 15:49-54). This separates us from our Christian life for those who are still living in our sanctification is complete.

By definition, in the Christian life, we have progressed from the first to the second sanctification. It is based upon the fact that you have been saved by grace through the blood of Christ with your sins forgiven. In addition, we have been given the position of being placed in God's family, found innocent by the blood of Christ, sealed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. These unalterable promises and being changed into a new person provide security to salvation and confidence in our relationship with God.

Therefore, we move forward in the Christian life serving God with confidence and joy.

GOALS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We have discussed the three sanctifications which delineate our Christian experiences:

1

SALVATION

Our legal sanctification by the blood of Christ by faith ([Romans 3:21-26](#))

2

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

We seek to become sanctified in our actions and thoughts as God is holy ([1 Peter 1:16](#))

3

HEAVEN

Christ takes us to our eternal home when our bodies are sanctified ([1 Corinthians 15:50ff](#))

Importantly, when one sanctification is complete, and we progress to the next, we cannot return to the prior sanctification. This helps us know that we have eternal security and confidence in our relationship with God (please see the last blog for a review of this important lesson).

So let's talk about scriptural-based goals for Christian living and the tools God provides by which we can accomplish them.

- *Be holy as God is holy* – We are to strive to develop godly characteristics in our life (1 Peter 1:16)
- *Live a life of faith*- (Romans 14:23; Colossians 2:6)
- *Serve God with your entire life* – In accomplishing this goal we have great freedom (Romans 12:1-2)

TOOLS FOR LEADING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

TOOL 1

THE BIBLE

We are to accept God's word as a true guide for our lives (1 Thessalonians 1:6).

In Paul's informative prayer in Colossians 1:9-14, he indicates the importance of approaching our Christian life in a knowledgeable way (verse 9). Accordingly, to act correctly (verse 10) we first must know how to think. We do this first by knowing God's Word, especially the epistles in the New Testament (Romans to Revelation 3). This is the section meant specifically to provide directions for the church age.

How do we learn the importance of the New Testament epistles in our lives? There is a process by which it develops:

GOD THE FATHER

All truth began with God and was given to His Son to give to man (John 14:24; John 17:14).

JESUS CHRIST

He came and spoke to us, as recorded in the gospels, so people would believe in Him as the Messiah. Upon the rejection of His message ([Matthew 12](#)), He taught the disciples about the coming age ([Matthew 13-18](#); [Matthew 24-25](#); [John 14-17](#)), later confirmed by the Apostle Paul ([2 Corinthians 12:2-4](#); [Colossians 1:25](#); [Ephesians 3:3](#)).

THE APOSTLES

God tasked the apostles to teach God's truth to the church ([Matthew 28:19-20](#), sometimes called "apostolic authority"). It was the listener's duty to obey what they heard from the apostles, not yet having the written scriptures. Importantly, the authority of the Bible itself is established not by just direct statements that it is scripture ([2 Peter 1:21](#); [2 Peter 3:16](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#)) but also by verses that indicate the authority of the apostles ([2 Thessalonians 3:4-6](#); [Colossians 1:25](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:14](#)). To them God gave the charge to teach His truth and later to write the epistles because they were taught by Christ Himself.

SECOND GENERATION CHRISTIANS

These believers received the word from the apostles and taught new believers under their authority (e.g., Timothy in the pastoral epistles).

THE BIBLICAL CANON

The true Word of God was written down as epistles with guidance by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16). These letters were circulated probably in the early church period when apparently an informal canon of scriptures was formed. A generally accepted canon existed in the 2nd century (1). The New Testament in its current form was finalized at the Synod of Hippo in 393 AD. The late finalization occurred probably due to Christians could not openly meet until Constantine legalized Christianity after he became the Roman emperor in 313 AD.

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Bible speaks of accepting God's word and using it as a basis for how we live our lives (2 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 6:17; 2 Peter 3:16). Consequently, we receive not only the will of God and the benefits of the Spirit but also a healthy mind and good wellbeing through the Christian life as outlined in the Bible (1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:7).

Far from being restrictive, the Bible liberates us by teaching us wisdom and truth - with very few commands! It allows us to live a life of faith without being deceived by damaging practices in the world (1 Timothy 4:4-5). The Bible is our guidebook for life. As we live it in faith we prove God's working within us with the accompanying joy of seeing Him bring fruit into our lives (Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9).

What great truths! What a privilege to know God through his Word and the little life that is holy and pleasing to him.

TOOL 2

GOD'S POWER

God's power in the New Testament for believers is manifested generally in two ways:

THE GOSPEL

([Romans 1:16-17](#)) – This is the power of God to salvation! The spirit is active in the process of convicting unbelievers of their sins ([John 16:10](#)).

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

([Ephesians 6:10-17](#)) – The magnificent Armor of God passage is critical to understanding our Christian life because it instructs us how to access God's power by describing a Greek hoplite soldier and his armament. Often, Christians wonder how they can know the power of God. These great verses describe it! However, it is also important in showing the role of the Spirit because His mighty actions are linked to each of the pieces of armor in other scriptures.

- **Truth (our belt to prepare us v.14)** – Living in truth is a fruit of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:9) and prepares our mind to make proper decisions and actions.
- **Righteousness (our breastplate v.14)** – A fruit of the Spirit is a holy heart that is set apart to serve God and perceives and rejects sin (Ephesians 5:9).
- **Share the gospel (the shoes to carry us to battle v.15)** – By telling others the message of salvation we see the power of God to change others and positively affect our society, which is assisted by the Spirit (Romans 1:16-17; 2 Timothy 1:7; John 16:8-11).
- **Faith (our shield v.16)** – A fruit of the Spirit also is faith in which we make our decisions and what God desires from us (Galatians 5:22-23; Romans 14:23).
- **Eternal security (our helmet v.17)** – The sound knowledge of our security of salvation protects our heads as we face troubles in this world and its function is from the Spirit (Romans 15:13, Romans 8:16).
- **The Bible (our sword V.17)** – The power of God we experience in our Christian life is through the action of the Spirit in accordance with the Bible (Hebrews 4:12).

BORDERS FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE — GOD’S COMMANDS

Although we have great freedom to pursue God in faith, He does place wise boundaries on our lives to keep us on the scriptural playing field so we do not run out of balance and take ourselves out of the action.

Admonishments for the Christian life

These exist to fulfill two general purposes from a holy God:

- Maintain an orderly society – These are reflected in commands such as “do not murder” or “do not steal” and are often repeated from the Old Testament. God’s order commands are interspersed throughout the epistles. In general, His commands are few and protective to us and society, leaving us a broad path in life in which He wants us to live by faith to serve Him.

Note: Old Testament and gospel commands – These commands reflect God’s holiness. Nonetheless, they dictate for another time when God administered His people differently. We obey commands within the epistles because these are for the church time in which we now live.

- Live a wise and godly life – Like the commands related to orderliness, these injunctions also are interspersed throughout the epistles and provide wisdom about how to lead the Christian life. Interestingly, research in the medical literature has shown that when such admonishments are obeyed they increase wellbeing, such as producing hope, forgiveness, thankfulness, and joy (2). Further, Teleios' research has shown that Christians who study the Bible and practice what it says its precepts on average have better well-being than those who do not. God made us and He knows our psychological profile and what is healthy for us.

Use your freedom wisely

Although God grants us wide freedom in our Christian walk, the Apostle Paul tells us not to misuse this freedom if we're causing other believers, who are following legalistic non-biblical commands out of faith, to stumble (Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8; 1 Corinthians 10:23ff).

An example of this might be drinking alcohol. Scripture tells us that we should not become drunk (Ephesians 5:18) but does not tell us not to drink alcohol. Therefore, we are free to partake of alcohol in a responsible way (1 Timothy 4:4-5) in which we remain sober. However, we should not drink if we are causing a Christian who believes that we should refrain from alcohol to become discouraged in their faith.

SUMMARY

God has granted us great freedom to live in faith in accordance with broad scriptural commands. Our ability to know the truth helps us navigate life in a productive and joyful way. We thank God for His provision and wise and truthful word.

We will discuss the tools he wants us to use to mature ourselves in Him in the next chapter.

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REFERENCE

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