

# WHY SHOULD WE LIVE TO FOLLOW CHRIST?

*“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

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Heb 12:2

Before Christ came to redeem the world, people were subjected to God's Ten Commandments, and strict laws and daily sacrifices to abide by.

However, Christ came to abolish the law, and offered to redeem us once and for all from being lost eternally, as John 3:16 states, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

In essence, salvation is not about works or sacrifices, but rather to believe in Christ from the heart, that He died to redeem us from sin, and to live to honor and worship God as He taught us.

The reason 1John 2:6 says, “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”

In Mat 16:24-26 Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”

Why such a command?

1Peter 2:21: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps.”

If we claim to be saved, do we understand our responsibility to follow Christ at His Word?

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# A HEART COMMITMENT TO FOLLOW CHRIST

*“Commit your works to the LORD,  
and your thoughts will be established.”*

*Pro 16:3*

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Without a shadow of a doubt, following Christ requires a commitment from the heart, a decision in other words to focus our lives on honoring God in all aspects of life.

Here's what Jesus said about this:

Luke 11:28: “Blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

John 8:12: “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

In other words, following Christ isn't merely to make a statement of faith, but very importantly to live by it.

What does committing to follow Christ consist of?

Col 3:17: “And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”

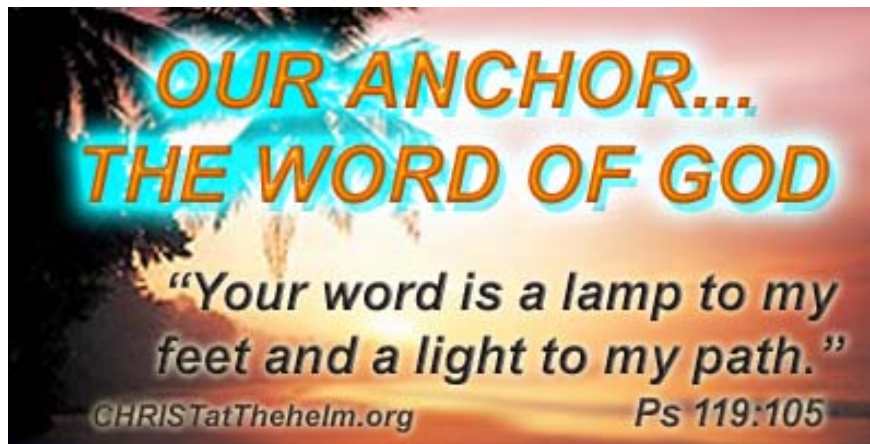
1Cor 6:20: “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.”

Pro 4:23: “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it *spring* the issues of life.”

In truth, commitment to follow Christ starts in the heart, so as to avoid being led away in error, as Jesus said in Mat 15:19, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”

How strong and dedicated are we in our commitment to follow Christ right now?

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What is our only sure anchor to guide us and keep us steadfast in following Christ?

2Tim 3:16-17: "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Heb 4:12: "For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Mat 4:4: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

Pro 18:15: "The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge."

Rom 10:17: "So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

In essence, no matter how the world might try to fool us, or whether false teachers might try to deceive us, the Word of God is our only secure anchor to discern between God's truth and the world's lies.

The very reason Paul said to put on the armor of God, and in Eph 6:17 stated, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

How anchored are we in the Word of God right now?

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What does obeying the voice of the Lord our God mean? What must we do to abide by this?

The Way:

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

The Truth:

John 8:12: "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Mat 7:24: "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

The Life:

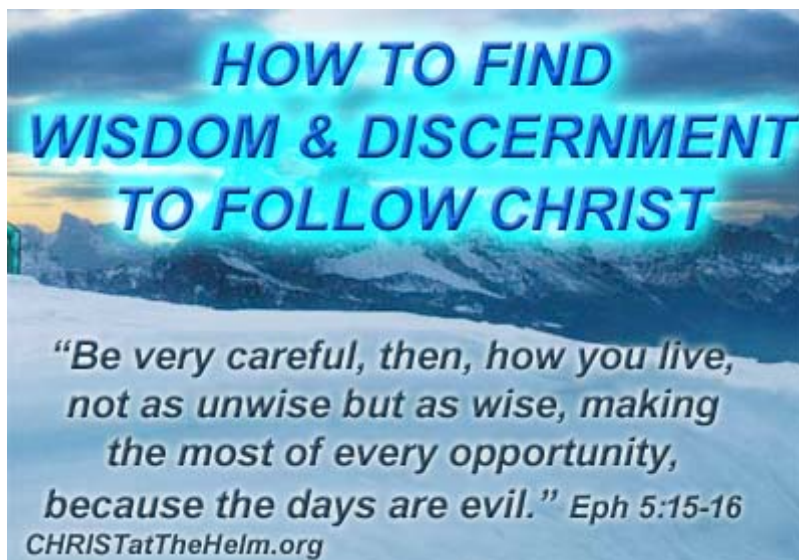
Luke 9:23: "Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

Eph 5:1-2: "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."

Gal 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

The Word of God obviously leaves no doubt about our responsibility to follow Christ, and the dedication and commitment we must have to follow through each and every day. Any question?

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The world provides plenty of opportunities for temptations, so we must make sure we avoid the traps of the enemy. However, how is this achieved?

1John 4:1: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Eph 5:6-7: “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them.”

Rom 12:2: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

How do we get wisdom?

Pro 9:10: “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.”

James 1:5: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

Pro 3:5-6: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Indeed, God’s wisdom and discernment through His Word is our only trusted source to avoid being fooled by the world. Will we stand by His Word?

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# IS FOLLOWING CHRIST A WALK IN THE PARK?

*“And you will be hated by all for My name’s sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.” Mat 10:22*

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Is the Christian life “a walk in the park” paved with material prosperity, abundance and blessings, as some proclaim? What does the Word of God tell us to expect for believing and following Christ?

John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

2Tim 2:3-4: “You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.”

2Tim 3:12: “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”

Following Christ as His disciple is indeed a challenge that will bring rejection, even from close relatives at times. What then is the reason to follow Christ wholeheartedly?

2Tim 1:12: “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”

James 1:12: “Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

Will we live to follow Christ even through trials?

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If we profess Christ as Savior and Lord, our lives should definitely reflect His teachings. True commitment to Christ obviously implies we surrender, follow Him, strive to live in accordance with His Word and bear fruit to support our confession of faith.

How should our life then be impacted?

1John 2:3-4: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Gal 5:24: "And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

1John 4:16: "And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

Then, how do we bear fruit?

John 15:5: "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

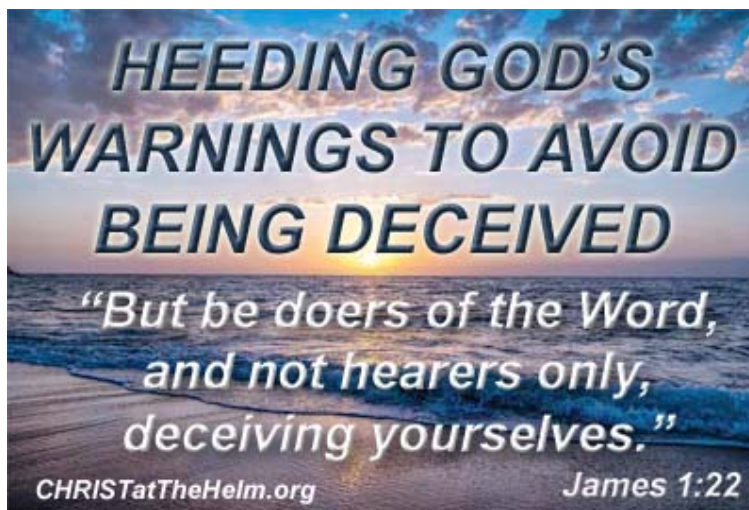
In truth, living by faith and following the teachings of Christ will produce fruit in our life to His glory, and is proof of our belief and salvation through Christ Jesus.

What is the purpose of bearing fruit?

John 15:8: "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

Does our life testify to being His disciple and bearing fruit to the glory of God?

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The Word of God enjoins us to be true in our commitment to follow Christ, and provides ample warnings for hypocrites. Here's what Jesus said on this:

Mat 10:38: "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

Luke 9:26: "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels."

Luke 9:62: "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Mat 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

In Rom 8:9 Paul clarified this: "But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."

Clearly, if we live by the spirit of the world, follow the flesh and abide by the ever changing principles of our society, we might fool people into believing we are saved; we might even fool ourselves as well, but we sure can't fool God.

The reason as well Heb 10:38 says, "Now the just shall live by faith; but if *anyone* draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him."

Will we heed God's warnings and follow Christ?

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