

CHRISTIANS

Christ in you, the hope of glory.
(Colossians 1:27)

Christians are people who are reconciled to God through their faith in Jesus Christ, His accomplished work on the cross, and His resurrection. Christians are people who received the life of Christ, and in Him the forgiveness of their sins.

For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

(Romans 5:10)

In Jesus Christ We Have a New Identity—Children of God

We were baptized—totally identified with Jesus. We died with Him, we were buried with Him, and we rose with Him. We have risen to a brand new life. We are new creatures.

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature;
the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

We have to fully grasp who we are in Christ Jesus. **Christians are:**

Dead to sin, but alive to God	Romans 6:11
Children of God	Romans 8:16
Secured in Christ	Romans 8:35–39
Saints by calling	1 Corinthians 1:2
Servants of a new covenant	2 Corinthians 3:6
Being transformed into the same image of the Lord	2 Corinthians 3:18
Ministers of reconciliation	2 Corinthians 5:18
Ambassadors for Christ	2 Corinthians 5:20
Temple of the living God	2 Corinthians 6:16
Justified by faith in Christ	Galatians 2:16
Sons of God	Galatians 3:26
Abraham's offspring, heirs	Galatians 3:29
Holy and blameless before God	Ephesians 1:4
Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise	Ephesians 1:13
Seated in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus	Ephesians 2:6
Children of light	Ephesians 5:8
Citizens of heaven	Philippians 3:20
Complete in Christ Jesus	Colossians 2:10
Beloved by God	1 Thessalonians 1:4
House of Christ	Hebrews 3:6
Partakers of Christ	Hebrews 3:14

Chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation	1 Peter 2:9
Free	1 Peter 2:16
Called to God's eternal glory	1 Peter 5:10
Partakers of the divine nature	2 Peter 1:4

I cannot stress enough the importance of knowing who we are in Christ. For example, if we are what we think, as the Bible tells us, then if we think of ourselves as sinners, sinning would be the thing to do. Right? We *were* sinners before we received Jesus. In Jesus we have a new identity—saint. What a motivation for godly living! We have to look at ourselves through God's eyes and see as He sees—always!

We, the Christians, are in the right standing with God. God loves us unconditionally. He accepted us in His beloved Son. He forgave us all our sins. He even imputed His righteousness to us. *Beloved, we have to believe it, and act upon it.* We have to rest in it, and rejoice in it. Thank you Jesus!

- We don't try to follow and please God in order to be loved.
God loves us and that is why we follow Him.
- We don't serve God to get His acceptance.
God accepts us and that is why we serve Him.
- We don't want to stop sinning to gain God's forgiveness.
We are forgiven and that is why we don't want to sin.

**What we do is not the deciding factor of who we are,
but who we are determines what we do.**

We have to know what God has accomplished for us already. We have to know what we have in Jesus. **In Christ Jesus we have:**

Eternal life	John 3:36
All knowledge	1 Corinthians 1:5
Freedom	Galatians 5:1
Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places	Ephesians 1:3
Redemption through His blood	Ephesians 1:7
Righteousness which comes from God	Philippians 3:9
Forgiveness of our sins	Colossians 1:13, 14
Everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of God	2 Peter 1:3

In Christ Jesus we are equipped in every good thing to do His will (Hebrews 13:21).

It is of paramount importance to know what we have in Christ Jesus.

We have to know what we should or should not do. **We should:**

Love one another as Jesus loves us	John 13:34, 35
Walk in newness of life	Romans 6:4
Serve in newness of the Spirit	Romans 7:6
Look at the things which are not seen	2 Corinthians 4:18
No longer live for ourselves, but Jesus	2 Corinthians 5:15
Be filled with the Spirit	Ephesians 5:18
Give thanks for all things in the name of Jesus	Ephesians 5:20
Pray at all times in the Spirit	Ephesians 6:18
Stand firm in the Lord	Philippians 4:1
Always rejoice in the Lord	Philippians 4:4
Be content in whatever circumstances	Philippians 4:11–13
Keep seeking the things above	Colossians 3:1
Set our mind on the things above	Colossians 3:2
Put on the new self	Colossians 3:10
Forgive each other just as Jesus forgave us	Colossians 3:13
Do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus	Colossians 3:17
Walk in a manner worthy of God	1 Thessalonians 2:12
Fix our eyes on Jesus	Hebrews 12:2

That is God's will for us. Brothers and sisters, we have to know these things and ponder them. We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Let us use it!

The Bible has a lot to say about what we should not do.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out
the desire of the flesh.

(Galatians 5:16)

Our goal as Christians is to focus on Jesus and to live by the Spirit. That will take care of sins. We have to get to know God and His love for us. For to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, results in being filled to all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19). It is God's love, and God's grace that is teaching us to say no to unrighteousness. Sometimes we get it all wrong. "Stop sinning and you will be spiritual." I am sure you have heard this teaching. But what does God say? "Get to know Me, understand My love for you, know who you are in Christ Jesus. You are My child, embrace My qualities, live by the Spirit." In the light of these truths, who wants to sin? Beloved, we have to explore the depths of God's wisdom.

Love of Christ Controls Us

Christians are under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21), under the law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2).

God is the one who causes our growth (1 Corinthians 3:6, 7), who will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish us (1 Peter 5:10), and who will always lead us in His triumph in Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14).

Do Not Love the World

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

(1 John 2:15–17)

As Christians we should never conform to the standards of the world!

The Full Armor of God

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,

and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

(Ephesians 6:13–17)

What does the armor of God represents? Jesus. He is the Truth, the Righteousness, the Word, the Salvation, and our Peace. Our faith must be in Him. We have to be “clothed” with Jesus; we have to know Him.

Obviously, there are people who profess Jesus, but don't possess Him. Jesus addresses these people in the following verses:

Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to Me on that day, “Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?”

And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”

(Matthew 7:21–23)

Professed atheists would not be able to say anything like that, so His words are directed to people who think they have Jesus, people who think they “work” for Him. In reality, they don’t know Him, and He doesn’t know them. All their knowledge of Jesus Christ is only “head knowledge.” They never acted upon their knowledge, and faith is action! Can you imagine yourself hearing those words? Mercy! So test yourself to be sure that you are a *genuine* Christian.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

(Galatians 5:22–25)

- Do you see the fruit of the Spirit in your life?
- Do you love others as Christ loves you? Unconditionally.
- Are you able to forgive others and self as God in Christ forgave you? Totally.
- Are you thankful and rejoicing?
- Are you experiencing the peace Jesus is talking about—His peace that lifts you up above all your circumstances?

If these qualities are yours and are increasing in your life—God is at work in you. If you don’t see these qualities in your life, you are either without Jesus or immature in Him, and there is a remedy.

If you are an immature believer, get to know Jesus, not just about Him. Make Him number one in your life. He is your best Friend. Nothing in this world compares to the riches we Christians have in Him. In Him we have all the love we will ever need and the hope of eternal glory.

How blessed are the people whose God is the Lord!

(Psalms 144:15)

If you are without Jesus, He is only a prayer away, and He is more than willing to come into your heart and save you.

That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved;

for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed."

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;

for "*Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.*"

(Romans 10:9–13)

Jesus said,

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

"By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

(John 13: 34, 35)

I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

(Romans 12:1, 2)

Wherefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

(Romans 15:7)

I have been crucified with Christ; and 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 delivered Himself up for me.

(Galatians 2:20)

Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

(Philippians 4:8)

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

(Colossians 2:6–8)

If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

(Colossians 3:1–4)

And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

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

And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

(Colossians 3:12–15)

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men,

instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus;

who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from

every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

(Titus 2:11–14)