

WHAT IS A TRUE CHRISTIAN?



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Introduction

Finding the Narrow Path

Nearly one-third of the earth's population professes to be Christian—and the number is steadily increasing. Due to growth in Africa and Latin America, projections suggest the number could reach 3 billion by the middle of the 21st century.

Christianity is the world's largest religion but is also the most divided. Throughout history, and even today, wars between “Christian” nations have led to countless instances of Christians slaughtering Christians. It's estimated that there are over 47,000 denominations or sects, each with distinct teachings about what a Christian is, what to believe and how to live.

The division and the poor examples of many who claim to be Christians have caused some skeptics to reject Christianity altogether.

There are many differing beliefs about how one becomes a Christian. Some view Christianity as something one is born into. Others connect it with infant baptism, and still others believe it simply involves professing faith in Jesus, whether through a prayer, baptism or joining a church.

The divisions within modern Christianity lead us to a simple conclusion: *They can't all be right.*

So, what exactly is a Christian?

If you consult a dictionary, you will probably find a definition similar to this: A Christian is a follower of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

But what does it really mean to follow Jesus' teachings?

To fully understand what a Christian is, we must turn to the Bible. The Bible, especially the New Testament, contains hundreds of scriptures that explain how people become Christians, what they must believe and how they will live.

Though it may sound exclusivist in our pluralistic society, the Bible reveals only *one path* for a person to become a true follower of Jesus Christ.

This booklet is not merely an intellectual exercise in understanding the

What Does the Word *Christian* Mean?

The words *Christian* and *Christians* appear only three times in the Bible.

The term first appears in Acts 11:26: "And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch." The Greek word *Christianos* simply means a *Christ-follower*.

This word is used only two more times in the Bible (Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). However, the kind of person it describes is found throughout Scripture. The New Testament uses many words and phrases to identify followers of Christ, all of which function as

synonyms for the term *Christian*. Each of the following terms helps deepen our understanding of what it truly means to be a Christian:

- **Believers** emphasizes their faith and belief in God the Father and Jesus Christ. They are fully convinced that Jesus was who He claimed to be.
- **Disciples** highlights that Christians are lifelong pupils of Jesus Christ—dedicated students and followers of His teachings and example.

biblical definition of a Christian. It is designed to guide you toward living an abundant life now and having eternal life in the future.

The Bible reveals a distinct process for becoming a Christian. It also outlines what Christians will believe and how they are called to live.

Describing what it means to follow Him, Jesus said, “Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:14).

His words show that genuine Christianity is not a popular or widely practiced path. It is a *narrow path* that only a few discover and follow in this age.

We hope and pray that you will be among the few who find it.

- **Children of God** reflects the truth that God is building a family and that Christians share a special Father-child relationship with God.
 - **Brethren** highlights the deep brotherly bond Christians share with other Christians in the Church of God.
 - **Saints** shows that Christians are to be holy and set apart from the world. They live godly lives amid a world of moral depravity.
 - **Followers of “the Way”** (Acts 9:2) points to the distinct lifestyle Christians are called to live. Christianity is a *way of life*.
 - **Fellow workers** declares Christians are to be active servants, setting examples of service and being engaged in the mission Christ gave the Church.
 - **The elect** reveals that Christians are individually called by God and have a special purpose in His plan.
- Together, these terms paint a fuller picture of what it means to be a Christian.



The Danger of False Christianity

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

Part of the reason it is important to understand the biblical marks of a true Christian is the fact that the Bible warns about *false* Christianity.

Can someone profess a belief in Jesus Christ yet still not fully follow the biblical description of a Christian?

What about the many churches and denominations that identify as Christian? With their wide variety of teachings, can they all genuinely represent Jesus Christ?

Did Jesus warn of false followers of ... Jesus?

Although Jesus was the most loving person to ever walk the earth, He spoke bluntly about religious matters.

Jesus lived and taught in a region filled with ultrareligious people who claimed to follow the God of Abraham. However, He could see through their outward piety and recognized that their beliefs and lifestyles were far removed from the God they professed to worship. Jesus made it clear that *claiming* to follow God does not necessarily make someone genuine.

In John 8, we find an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees, devout Jews who proudly identified themselves as Abraham's children (verses 33 and 39).

Jesus pointed out that regardless of what they called themselves, their lives were utterly inconsistent with how Abraham lived. "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham" (verse 39). Then, after they countered that God was their Father, Jesus said, "If God were your Father, you would love Me" (verse 42).

Jesus challenged their claim, shockingly declaring: "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do" (verse 44). Regardless of what they professed, Jesus said, their conduct aligned them with Satan, not God.

This teaches a vital lesson: Jesus doesn't accept us solely based on self-identification.

Jesus' critique of false religious pretenses extended beyond Judaism. He also corrected those who *claimed* to follow Him, but who lived contrary to His teachings and example.

Toward the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned of "false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Outwardly they claimed to be Jesus' servants, but in reality they lived contrary to Him.

He then made an even more pointed statement: "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" (verse 21).

Consider the powerful implication: It's possible to believe in and call Jesus *Lord*, yet not be a genuine believer. Jesus identified "lawlessness"—rejecting or ignoring God's revealed law—as a hallmark of false belief (verse 23).

In addition to lawlessness, Jesus highlighted another indicator of false belief: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7). Jesus was zeroing in on false worship—outwardly praising God, but substituting man-made ideas in place of His teachings.

These statements provide guidelines for recognizing false Christianity—both in the world and in ourselves.

False Christianity rejects God's laws. The 10 Commandments are the essential framework for Christian living. Scripture is clear: Rejecting even

one commandment is equivalent to rejecting them all (Matthew 5:19; James 2:10).

Some churches teach that the commandments were abolished at the cross, while others uphold some commandments but reject or alter others. For example, many reject or modify the Fourth Commandment to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

False Christianity teaches man-made doctrines. Jesus taught that His followers must live “by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

When we examine modern churches, we find many teachings and practices totally disconnected from the Bible. Consider popular holidays like Easter and Christmas. These observances lack biblical roots and can

Paul warned that people could present their ideas under the guise of Jesus’ name, without any genuine connection to the true Jesus Christ.

be traced back to ancient pagan customs. (For more on this, see our booklet [*From Holidays to Holy Days: God’s Plan for You.*](#))

Jesus warned that false beliefs wouldn’t be limited to His time. When asked about the end times, His first warning was of people falsely claiming to represent Him: “Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come *in My name*, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many” (Matthew 24:4-5, emphasis added throughout).

After the New Testament era, many churches and leaders emerged, all claiming to represent Christ while replacing His teachings with human traditions.

A troubling trend impacts the first-century Church

After His resurrection, Jesus established a spiritual body called the Church. Jesus declared to His disciples, “I will build *My* church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). It would be *His* Church, under *His* leadership, tasked with faithfully preserving the truths *He* taught.

He later reinforced this critical purpose by commissioning its leaders to continue to teach others “to observe all things that *I* have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

The Church began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, proclaiming the same doctrines Jesus taught. Under the apostles' leadership and the guidance of the men they trained, God called new believers, and congregations were formed throughout the Mediterranean world (Acts 9:31; 14:23; 16:4-5; Titus 1:5).

However, as the first century advanced toward the second, the zeal and faithfulness of many believers began to fade.

The remaining apostles noticed a disconcerting trend. When a congregation formed under their leadership, it would spiritually thrive under their direct pastoral care. However, when they moved on, new ideas would often surface. Local personalities would arise, teaching different doctrines.

The apostles observed the gradual emergence of false versions of Christianity both within and outside the Church. Many of these distortions reflected the issues Jesus warned about: rejecting God's law and establishing doctrines of men.

The apostles warn of false Christianity

The apostles warned of this troubling trend in their apostolic letters.

Paul: Beware of impostors and false gospels

Paul passionately addressed this troubling trend in his letter to the Galatians.

He wrote, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a *different gospel*, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to *pervert* the gospel of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7). To Paul's astonishment, some were teaching and accepting a distorted gospel, very different from the one Christ taught.

Later, Paul warned of another spiritual threat that had "corrupted" some in Corinth (2 Corinthians 11:2-4). He was concerned for the brethren there: "For if he who comes preaches *another Jesus* whom we have not preached, or if you receive a *different spirit* which you have not received, or a *different gospel* which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!" (verse 4).

In no uncertain terms, he identified those responsible as "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness" (verses 13-15).

Paul warned that people could present their ideas under the guise of Jesus' name, without any genuine connection to the true Jesus Christ. Instead, they promoted a false Jesus, vastly different from the one revealed in the Gospels.

In a letter to his protégé Timothy, Paul warned that false teachers would become increasingly influential (2 Timothy 3:13), leading people to believe “fables” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Paul frequently urged Christians to “hold fast”—cling tightly to the truth and reject false doctrines (1 Corinthians 15:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Timothy 1:13; Titus 1:9; Hebrews 10:23).

John: Be acutely aware of deceivers and test the spirits

John wrote letters to Christians in the late first century. This aging apostle also saw these trends and warned of “those who try to deceive you” (1 John 2:26). He urged the brethren, “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

In his second letter, he warned that “many deceivers have gone out into the world” and that they should be avoided (2 John 1:7, 10). In his third letter, he identified a man who had emerged within a congregation and led people astray (3 John 1:9-10).

Peter: Heresies are emerging from within and outside the Church

Peter was also deeply concerned about this danger. He warned of “false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies” (2 Peter 2:1).

Peter noted that false teachers were distorting Paul's writings to promote ideas Paul never intended (2 Peter 3:15-16). Throughout history, Paul's words have been twisted to promote many false teachings, especially on law and grace.

Jude: Resist deception by clinging to the true faith

Jude, one of Jesus' half-brothers, wrote that “certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness” (Jude 1:4). Sadly, distorted interpretations of grace persist even to this day.

Jude encouraged Christians to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (verse 3). He urged them to “remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 17).

These warnings emphasize how seriously the apostles viewed this threat to the true faith.

The emergence of fourth-century Christianity

After John's death, apostasy accelerated. Over the next three centuries, various forms of Christianity emerged, teaching distinct and conflicting doctrines.

The form of Christianity that developed in Rome, the world's most powerful city, gradually became dominant. It absorbed ideas from the Greco-Roman pantheon, blending biblical ideas with traditions rooted in paganism. Its dominance accelerated with the support of Emperor Constantine.

The Edict of Milan (313) legalized this form of Christianity, enabling it to grow without fear of persecution. Constantine, who remained a pagan until his deathbed, presided over the Council of Nicaea in 325. This council laid the groundwork for the development of the doctrine of the Trinity and formalized Easter observance in place of the biblical Passover.

Just over 50 years later, this version of Christianity became Rome's state religion, expanding its influence and cementing its religious and political power.

Many other unbiblical teachings were adopted by this church, including:

- **The immortality of the soul.** The belief that the soul is immortal and migrates to a place of reward or torment immediately after death became the standard teaching.
- **Sunday worship and holidays.** Sunday was adopted as the weekly day of worship, and holidays rooted in paganism replaced the biblical holy days.
- **The veneration of relics and saints.** Symbols, imagery and statues were introduced in worship, as well as the practice of praying to deceased saints.
- **The church is the Kingdom of God.** The idea that the Kingdom is not a literal government to come, but is the church, began to be taught.

This church remains one of the world's largest religions, misrepresenting Jesus Christ and misleading millions of well-meaning people into accepting its unbiblical teachings.

Through the centuries, this church ruthlessly persecuted those who rejected its teachings, including genuine Christians. Faithful believers often had to flee for their lives and remained a small, unpopular minority, as Jesus had foretold (Luke 12:32).

Around 1,200 years after becoming Rome's official religion, this church's grip on Christendom weakened when thousands protested its more egregious abuses and doctrines. Reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli led the 16th-century movement known as the Protestant Reformation.

Although the reformers aimed to address Rome's blatant corruption and doctrinal errors, they retained many unbiblical teachings and introduced many of their own. What many don't realize is that the hundreds of denominations that emerged from the Protestant Reformation failed to return to scriptural Christianity. It's important to explore the Bible and discover how it defines Christianity.

In the following chapters, we'll explore hundreds of scriptures that define authentic Christianity—what Christians believe and how they live. Only a few have followed this biblical path over the past 2,000 years.

Yet, as Jesus promised, true Christianity has never disappeared.



A Christian Is Called by the Father

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

In mainstream Christianity, there are generally two ideas about how one becomes a Christian.

- **By birth.** Billions consider themselves Christian because they were born into a Christian family. Christianity is often seen as a cultural or family identity. Millions of parents bring their infants to be baptized into various denominations each year.
- **By choosing to become a Christian.** Denominations have different teachings on how this occurs. Some believe baptism is essential, though the method often varies. Others teach that it happens by just professing Jesus as Savior, sometimes through a personal prayer, a public testimony, an altar call or simply by joining a church.

While being born into a believing family is a tremendous blessing and making a personal choice is an essential step, neither automatically makes someone a Christian.

The Bible reveals that God initiates the process.

Jesus taught the necessity of God's calling

Shortly after being rejected by some of His countrymen, Jesus

shared a profound truth to help His disciples understand why so many, including religious leaders, did not embrace Him.

He said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me *draws* him; and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

Jesus was saying that *nobody* can become a Christian unless he or she is drawn to Him by God the Father. The word *draw* means to pull or drag. This same word is used to describe the disciples struggling to *draw* up a net full of fish from the water (John 21:6).

Later in John 6, Jesus reinforced this: “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been *granted* to him by My Father” (John 6:65).

The word *granted* here means given a special gift or opportunity. Jesus used this term to explain that people cannot fully understand spiritual truth unless God gives them the ability to do so (Matthew 19:11).

Jesus’ message was clear: *God initiates the process of someone becoming a Christian.*

God selects whom He draws to His Son, Jesus Christ. While individuals must respond, the process of becoming a Christian begins with God, not human effort.

Paul often emphasized that Christianity is a direct calling from God (1 Corinthians 1:26-27; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2 Timothy 1:9).

God has always called people

When we look at the people God worked with in the Old Testament, one factor stands out: God always initiated the relationship.

Consider a few examples:

- God called Abraham to leave his homeland and go to a land He promised, to establish a nation through him (Genesis 12:1-3).
- God called Moses to lead Israel out of bondage so they could become a nation (Exodus 3:10).
- God called the nation of Israel to be a special people, to model His way of life to all the nations (Deuteronomy 4:6-8; Isaiah 42:6-7).
- God called David to lead Israel as a united nation and to begin a dynasty that would eventually be given to the Messiah (1 Samuel 16:12-13; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Luke 1:32).
- God called Esther and placed her in a position to save the Jewish people from annihilation during their captivity in Persia (Esther 4:14).

God chose these men and women to fulfill special purposes and have a relationship with Him (James 2:23; Exodus 33:11).

Jesus continued this pattern when He selected a group of 12 ordinary men to be His disciples and later apostles (Luke 5:10; Mark 1:17, 19-20). Jesus told them, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you” (John 15:16).

God continues to call people today for His special purpose.

How does God call people today?

In the Old Testament, God often used direct means to call people. God directly spoke to Abraham and appeared to Moses in a burning bush.

But how does the calling Jesus described in John 6:44 occur? How does the Father draw people to Jesus Christ today?

When on earth, Jesus worked directly with those God chose as His disciples (John 17:6). But after His ascension, He organized His disciples into a new entity, the Church. As the Head of the Church, He continued His work (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:23). This Church, led by Christ through His servants, would proclaim His gospel to the world and serve as a key instrument for God to call disciples to Himself (Matthew 28:19-20).

Through the ages, the Church would proclaim the gospel through various methods—including preaching, writing, mass media and personal examples. God ensures that those He is calling somehow encounter the message.

Let’s take a closer look at how that process works.

A case study in God’s calling

One of the most dramatic examples of God’s calling at work through His Church occurred at the Church’s founding on the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31.

On that day, a large crowd of Jews and proselytes from many locations gathered at the temple in Jerusalem to observe the festival. God then inspired the apostles to preach the gospel, miraculously causing the people to understand the apostles in their own languages.

Here’s what happened to the people God called that day:

First, they were taught the truth. Peter delivered a powerful sermon, logically proving that Jesus was the Christ and confronting the crowd with their personal responsibility for His death (Acts 2:36).

Second, they were “cut to the heart.” A significant part of the crowd responded. “Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart” (verse 37). They accepted Peter’s message and were deeply convicted, both intellectually and emotionally.

Third, they were spurred to action. Sincerely and humbly, they asked, “What shall we do?” (verse 37). Their motivation to act was clear evidence that God was calling them.

Fourth, they needed to seek repentance and baptism. Peter instructed them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (verse 38). Nearly 3,000 people “gladly received his word” and were baptized on that day (verse 41).

Fifth, they needed to “be saved from this perverse generation” (verse 40). They were to leave behind the sinful ways of this world. In other words, they were to “come out from among them and be separate” (2 Corinthians 6:17).

Sixth, they came together as the Church. They weren’t sent out to live the Christian life in isolation. They joined together to form the nucleus of the group God would use to fulfill His purpose on earth—the Church of God (Acts 2:42).

Seventh, they remained faithfully committed. While we don’t know the fate of all 3,000, the chapter concludes with them “continuing daily,” serving God (verse 46). Faithful commitment to the end is the final element of the Christian calling (Hebrews 3:14).

Though that day was extraordinary because of the signs and large numbers, the elements of their calling are not unique. God continues to call people today using the same seven foundational steps.

We will explore these steps in detail throughout this booklet, but let’s first examine how God begins working within the human mind at the start of this process.

God uniquely prepares those He calls

Regarding the 3,000 people God called that day, we know only that they heard Peter’s preaching and were convinced of the truth. We don’t know how God prepared them individually for that moment. From the stories of His Old Testament servants, we see that God often works in people’s lives long before directly calling them.

Moses is a prime example. God prepared him for 80 years—first as a prince in Egypt and later as a shepherd in the wilderness—for a special responsibility. Though Moses was unaware of it, God was working in Moses’ life, molding and shaping his character through decades of experiences, long before He revealed Himself in the burning bush.

God often works subtly through time and experiences to prepare those He calls. Many Christians can identify experiences earlier in their lives that prepared them for their eventual calling.

How God opens a human mind

Let's now examine the direct process God uses to call a person.

The 3,000 people who were baptized on that Pentecost understood Peter's sermon, were convicted and acted. Yet just weeks earlier, the crowds in Jerusalem had angrily called for Jesus' death. Perhaps some of the same people were in this crowd. How would someone go from rejecting Jesus, or even considering Him a blasphemer, to humbly accepting Him as his or her Savior and seeking to follow His teachings?

The individuals called in Acts 2 experienced what every human being God calls must experience—God's intervention to *open his or her mind*.

Today, God calls people in a variety of ways. Depending on their background, some experience a more dramatic calling, while others have a quieter, more gradual calling.

The Bible shows that all human beings have a nature inherently contrary to God. Though we are born neither good nor evil, we live in a world “under the sway of the wicked one” (1 John 5:19). Ever since

Satan deceived Eve in the Garden of Eden, he has effectively deceived and led every human being into sin (Revelation 12:9; Romans 3:23). He has corrupted human nature to be attuned to his nature.

Paul wrote, “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). The word *carnal* simply means fleshly. The human mind naturally resists submission to God's authority.

The Bible also describes carnality as spiritual blindness (Matthew 13:13-15; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 4:17-18). The majority of human beings think carnally because they are blinded to God's way and deceived by Satan.

When God calls people, He begins the process by removing their spiritual blindness and allowing them to see and perceive His truth. What once made no sense to them gradually becomes clear. What was once rejected is slowly embraced. What once seemed unimportant becomes the most important thing in life.

This opening of the mind to discern truth occurs through God's Spirit.

Here's how Paul described this process of coming to understand the things of God: "God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God . . . No one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10-11). Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would "guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).

The human mind can perceive and grasp the "deep things of God" (spiritual truth) only through God's intervention. Without it, the carnal mind dismisses God's ways as foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:14). When God's Spirit opens a person's mind, he or she will not only accept the truth but also develop a deep love for it (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

So, how does God go about opening a person's mind to His truth?

A tale of three callings

For some people, like the 3,000 in Acts 2, God's calling happens quickly and dramatically. They were assembled to obey God and were called through a powerful, inspired sermon.

A couple of years later, a man named Saul of Tarsus was on a rampage, trying to kill Christians and stamp out the Church. But God had other plans for him, dramatically intervening in his life by striking him down and blinding him for three days.

This temporary blindness highlighted that Saul had been living in spiritual blindness and needed God's intervention to see. As God restored his physical sight, He also opened Saul's eyes spiritually. Saul embraced the truths he had once opposed and became one of Christianity's greatest proponents (Acts 9:1-20).

For most people, however, the opening of their minds occurs in much less dramatic ways.

Most people's calling is more similar to that of a woman named Lydia. Lydia's calling began with a visit to a river outside the city of Philippi, where Jews would gather on the Sabbath to pray and fellowship. On one particular Sabbath, Paul visited this riverfront and spoke to them about the truths of God.

From that conversation, “the Lord *opened her heart* to heed the things spoken by Paul” (Acts 16:14). This led to her being baptized and living her life as a faithful servant of God.

Both Paul and Lydia received God’s calling and came to the same understanding—though the means were quite different. One occurred dramatically with miracles and a voice from heaven, and the other came about from a conversation by a river.

Paul was converted from being a vicious persecutor to being a devoted servant of Christ, preaching the gospel to hundreds of people. Lydia went from sincerely, but incompletely, worshipping God to becoming a committed Christian, faithfully serving the brethren in her congregation.

Though one may seem dramatic and the other mundane, Paul and Lydia experienced the same Christian calling and shared the same hope.

Today, God calls people in a variety of ways. Depending on their background, some experience a more dramatic calling, while others have a quieter, more gradual calling. Some are called out of deeply sinful lifestyles, while others come from generally moral backgrounds.

Some discover God’s truth through the powerful preaching of a minister, while others are drawn through the positive example of a friend or coworker. Others may find the truth by reading an online article, while some are taught it by their families from a young age (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14).

God uses various methods to get people’s attention and open their minds. How He called the 3,000 differed from how He called Paul—and both were distinct from how He worked with Lydia.

If God is calling you, your experience will be unique to you—but no less significant than that of Paul, Lydia or the 3,000.

So, how can you know if God is calling you?

Is God calling you?

How can you know if God is calling you to the narrow path? Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Am I beginning to understand the Bible when I read it?
- Am I beginning to act on the knowledge I’m gaining from the Bible?
- Have I found that the more I learn biblical truth, the greater my desire is to learn more?
- Has my thinking shifted from resisting God’s law to valuing it as the best way to live?

- Do I desire to communicate and have a relationship with God through prayer?
- Have I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, trusting Him for salvation from the penalty of sin—eternal death?

If you answered many of these questions affirmatively, God is likely drawing you toward repentance.

What do you do now?

The following chapters build upon the foundation laid in this chapter. As we move forward, we'll explore the biblical characteristics that define a Christian. All of these traits hinge on this vital truth: *Becoming a Christian is possible only through God's direct calling.*

A person doesn't become a Christian through an emotional appeal, clever arguments or even by a personal decision. God must initiate the process by opening a person's mind to His truth and providing the desire and motivation to act on it.

However, the individual also has a role to play in this process.

When God calls people, He doesn't override their free will and force them to follow. His calling is like discovering a hidden, narrow path along a familiar trail. Once the narrow path is revealed, it is up to the individual to decide whether to change direction and follow it or do nothing and remain on the easy path.

Revelation 17:14 outlines three characteristics of God's true followers: "called, chosen, and faithful."

The first characteristic—*called*—describes God making His truth and way of life available to a person. *Chosen* can also refer to what God does, as well as our need to make a commitment through repentance and baptism, *choosing* the narrow path. *Faithful*, as we'll explore later, refers to the need for a believer to stay steadfast and consistent.

In the next chapter, we'll examine the specific actions God requires us to take to *choose* the narrow path.

The Three Elements of God's Calling

God's calling consists of three major elements:

- 1. Called *out*.** God calls Christians to come out of this world and its ways. The disciples were chosen "out of the world" (John 15:19). Christianity isn't about physically separating oneself and becoming an isolated hermit (John 17:15). It's about coming *out* of the world's ways and influences and being different (Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17).
- 2. Called *together*.** God doesn't call Christians out of the world to walk the narrow path in seclusion. He formed the Church and expects His people to regularly congregate to learn, grow, fellowship, serve and do His work (Ephesians 4:11-13; Hebrews 10:25).
- 3. Called *for*.** God has a purpose for everything He does, especially for those He has called. God is calling us to be children in His family, serving others in His Kingdom (Hebrews 2:10; Revelation 5:10). In this life, Christians are called to serve others, support the preaching of the gospel and build godly character in preparation for the future roles God will give them.



A Christian Believes

“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” (John 3:16).

Belief is absolutely an essential part of the process of becoming a Christian.

After all, we cannot have a relationship with anyone without first believing that person exists. Many scriptures state that belief is the starting point for having a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

One of the seminal moments in Peter’s life was when Jesus asked him who he believed Jesus was. Peter’s answer was simple, yet profound: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). Jesus then connected Peter’s belief to the Father’s calling (verse 17).

Believing that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God was pivotal in Peter’s journey—and it must be in yours as well.

Jesus declared that believing in His identity as the Son of God is an essential step on the path to eternal life (John 3:36, see also John 6:40, 47).

Misunderstanding belief

Yet, as important as belief is, many have misunderstood its depth.

Over the years, preachers have held revivals, encouraging people to just *believe* on Jesus and be saved. Televangelists sometimes invite viewers to recite a short prayer at home to receive salvation.

This approach suggests that simply asserting a recognition of Jesus makes someone a Christian.

We've already established that the Father must call a person, but is that calling only an invitation to believe in Jesus?

What it really means to believe in Jesus Christ

Believing in Jesus is much more than a superficial acknowledgment that He once lived.

It means having the absolute conviction that He was and is God, the Word, through whom God created all things, who gave up His glory to become human. It means being absolutely certain that He lived a sinless life, allowed Himself to be crucified for your sins, was resurrected and now sits in glory at the Father's right hand, and will return as King of Kings.

But it goes even deeper. Belief isn't just about believing

Jesus affirmed that Christians must base their lives on the entirety of God's Word.

in Jesus' existence—it also means *believing Jesus*. In other words, being fully convinced that every word He spoke is true and authoritative.

It means taking His words seriously, obeying them and recognizing that His way is the only path to salvation—and is also the best way to live. It means building your life on His teachings and example, understanding that He is not just your Savior but also your Master, Lord and Teacher (John 13:14).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasized the necessity of having faith in and acting on His words: "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" (Matthew 7:24).

Sadly, when people speak of accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior, it can be presented in a shallow manner without a deep comprehension of all that it means.

Accepting Jesus as *Lord* means acknowledging His absolute sovereignty over your life. Accepting Him as *Savior* means recognizing the excruciating

price He paid to cover the penalty you deserved. Deeply internalizing both must lead to a deep love and commitment to serve and obey Him.

It is necessary to believe, acknowledge and profess that Jesus is Lord and Savior because “there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

But is this the only thing we must believe to be a Christian?

Believe the gospel

Jesus also taught people to “believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15). The “gospel of the kingdom of God” was the message Jesus preached as He walked the earth (verse 14).

Put succinctly, the gospel is the good news that Christ will return to this earth to restore God’s government and bring peace through His reign. God is calling people to prepare to rule with Him when His Kingdom comes to this earth.

Nearly everything Jesus said and did centered on the Kingdom of God (Matthew 4:23; 9:35). He urged His disciples to make it their highest priority (Matthew 6:33).

When we fully understand and believe the gospel message, we realize that the only way we can receive eternal life is to be forgiven of our sins and seek His righteousness.

So, a significant component of believing Jesus Christ is accepting and believing the gospel He brought.

Believe the Word of God

A third vital thing every Christian must believe is the inspiration and authority of God’s Word, the Bible.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the disciples “believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said” (John 2:22). A Christian must believe in Jesus Christ, His gospel message and the Scriptures.

The Bible is not just an ancient document; it is the inspired words of God Himself (2 Timothy 3:16). When describing the inspiration of the Bible, Paul used the Greek word *theopneustos*, which literally means “God-breathed.”

Jesus affirmed that Christians must base their lives on the entirety of God’s Word: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

For Christians to base their lives on the Bible, they must sincerely believe it is God’s Word and the ultimate standard of truth (John 17:17).

This belief inspires Christians to approach it with deep reverence and respect (Isaiah 66:2).

Notice how a Christian should interact with God's Word: "When you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

Christians will accept and approach the Bible not as words of men—but as authoritative truth, words directly from God Himself.

From belief to action

This chapter has shown the necessity of belief. When God opens people's minds, He calls them to a completely different way of thinking, changing their beliefs.

Belief is an essential step in the Christian journey, but it is just the starting point.

The Bible warns about the limitations of belief, stating that "even the demons believe—and tremble" (James 2:19). James emphasizes that faith is dead without action (verse 17).

Defining Christianity as merely believing is incomplete. While belief is essential, it must be the stepping stone that leads to action—a complete transformation in how we live our lives (Romans 12:1-2).

In the next chapter, we'll explore some of the first actions every individual must take to begin walking the narrow path.

A Christian Repents and Is Baptized

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

As we’ve seen, there are many views on what it takes to become a Christian. While some groups do practice baptism in various forms, others overlook it entirely, teaching that simply professing Jesus as Savior is enough to become a Christian.

But the Bible shows that belief must lead to action.

The people God called in Acts 2 asked the apostles what they should do. Every individual God is calling must ask, “What should I do?”

Peter’s answer was simple and direct: “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

To start walking the narrow path, a person must repent of his or her sins and be baptized.

The necessity of genuine repentance

Every person reading this has a common problem: sin.

Sin is the number one obstacle to someone being a Christian and inheriting eternal life.

The Bible defines sin as “lawlessness”—disregarding or opposing God’s law (1 John 3:4). When we disobey that law, we incur the penalty of death—“the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

Repentance is the *only* way to be saved from that death sentence. Without it, one cannot truly be a Christian or have any hope of eternal life.

This is why *repent* was the first word of Peter’s response when the crowd asked what they should do, and it is why Jesus emphasized repentance in His preaching (Mark 1:15). The book of Hebrews lists repentance as one of the fundamental doctrines of the faith (Hebrews 6:1). Few biblical concepts are more important to understand than repentance.

Repentance is often defined as feeling remorse or asking for forgiveness. Although those concepts are part of it, neither represents the full meaning of repentance. In the same way that God initiates our calling, He also guides us to repentance (Acts 11:18).

The Greek word translated repentance, *metanoeo*, literally means “to change one’s mind” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). Simply put, repentance is a change in thinking that leads to a change in conduct.

Three components of repentance

Biblical repentance has three essential components:

1. The deep recognition of sin.

To repent, we must first understand what sin is—the breaking of God’s law. This includes learning God’s laws, their meaning and how we have personally transgressed them. It requires a deep recognition of the seriousness of sin and the penalty it brings.

Repentance goes beyond acknowledging guilt for individual sins. It involves realizing that our very nature, down to our core, is inherently sinful and hostile to God (Romans 8:7; Mark 7:20-23).

2. Guilt that leads to a desire to be forgiven.

Understanding our personal sinfulness and the penalty we’ve earned should lead to a deep feeling of remorse and guilt. But this feeling can’t linger and go nowhere. It can’t become a debilitating guilt. It must provoke a deep desire to take action—to have our sins forgiven and blotted out (2 Corinthians 7:9-10).

We begin this process by going to God in heartfelt prayer and confessing our sins and our sinfulness (1 John 1:9-10).

3. A determined commitment to live differently.

We must then seek God's forgiveness and commit to a complete transformation in how we think and live—we *turn* and *change*. Repentance is a full commitment to abandoning our old ways and pursuing a new way of life. Paul summarized it simply: "Turn to God, and do works befitting repentance" (Acts 26:20). This includes changing both our thoughts and our actions (Isaiah 55:7).

Repentance is a crucial step that must be followed by the outward act of baptism.

The necessity of water baptism

In Acts 2, after urging his audience to repent, Peter said, "Let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Peter learned the importance of baptism directly from Christ, who taught that those responding to the gospel must be baptized (Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus underscored its necessity by being baptized as an example, despite having no sins to wash away (Matthew 3:13-16).

A repentant believer will seek water baptism to formalize the beginning of a new life. Baptism symbolizes the washing away of sins and the death of the "old man" (Romans 6:6)—the old, sinful way of life.

Baptism is practiced in various ways across churches, including sprinkling, pouring or even without water. However, to understand biblical baptism, consider the Greek word *baptizō*. The word literally means *to immerse or submerge*.

Scripture is clear that baptism requires enough water to fully submerge an individual from head to toe (Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38-39).

Furthermore, only full immersion aligns with the deep spiritual symbolism of baptism:

- **The cleansing, or washing away, of sins.** Just as water is used to wash and cleanse, the waters of baptism symbolize the complete washing away of sins (Acts 22:16). Emerging from the water after being fully submerged represents the total forgiveness of sin (Acts 2:38).
- **The death of the old man.** Upon baptism, one symbolically buries the old sinful self in a watery grave (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism signifies the death of the "old man," freeing us from the penalty of and slavery to sin so that we can move forward in obedience (verse 6).

- **The emergence of a new life.** With the old man symbolically left for dead in the baptismal waters, we emerge cleansed of our sins and fully committed to walking “in newness of life” (verse 4) and to becoming a “new man” (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10).
- **The putting on of Jesus Christ.** “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). To “put on Christ” means not only to begin thinking and living like Him but also to literally bear His name. It is through baptism that a person becomes a Christian in the truest sense of the word.

Only water baptism by immersion can fully represent the spiritual reality and symbolism God intended for baptism.

And the Bible shows that baptism must be followed by another ceremony for someone to become a Christian.

The often neglected “laying on of hands”

The New Testament reveals a ceremony that immediately follows baptism: the “laying on of hands.” This ceremony is listed as a fundamental doctrine in Hebrews 6:2. While some churches practice baptism by immersion, very few understand or practice the laying on of hands.

The significance of this ceremony is found in Acts 8, when Peter and John visited a group in Samaria who had been baptized but had not received the laying on of hands. Peter and John then “laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17, see also Acts 19:5-6).

While past sins are forgiven at baptism, the Holy Spirit is given through the laying on of hands.

In this ceremony, a minister of Jesus Christ places his hands on the head of a newly baptized person and prays, asking God to grant the person the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God’s very essence and power.

This is crucial because a person is a Christian only after receiving God’s Holy Spirit. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God” (Romans 8:14, see also verses 9-10).

When a person receives the Holy Spirit, he or she is imbued with God’s power to “put to death the deeds of the body” (verse 13) and “be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2). In other words, the Holy Spirit strengthens a person to overcome sin and build godly character (Ephesians 3:16).

A person with the Holy Spirit will begin building the character of God Himself. We’ll explore those characteristics more in Chapter 6.

It is important to note that the Holy Spirit doesn’t possess a person and

force God's character on him or her. The Holy Spirit *leads* a Christian—but a Christian must willingly follow and do his or her part. A Christian must do what Paul encouraged Timothy to do: “Stir up the gift of God [the Holy Spirit] which is in you through the laying on of my hands” (2 Timothy 1:6).

A person who willingly allows God's Spirit to work in his or her mind will live a life characterized by power and love and a sound mind (verse 7). Confidence, genuine care for others and wise, balanced thinking are key traits of someone led by God's Spirit.

Count the cost

As we learned in this chapter, the Bible reveals a specific process for becoming a Christian.

When people respond to God's calling, they recognize their personal sinfulness and pursue forgiveness and repentance. They learn that forgiveness is possible only through baptism (picturing the washing away of their sins) and the laying on of hands (for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit).

This process requires Christians to leave their old ways behind and commit to an entirely new way of life—a *converted* life.

Given its magnitude, this commitment shouldn't be made hastily or solely on emotion. We encourage those God is calling to approach this process thoughtfully and intentionally—studying these topics in the Bible and seeking God's guidance through prayer and through counsel with an ordained minister of Jesus Christ.

Jesus urged people to “count the cost” (Luke 14:28) before following Him. This means carefully considering the sacrifice and commitment God requires and reflecting soberly on whether we are genuinely prepared and willing to make that commitment.

Baptism and the laying on of hands represent both a commitment and a covenant. It is a covenant (agreement) one makes to fully surrender one's life to God, aligning one's will completely with His. In return, God promises help for the person through His Spirit and, ultimately, the gift of eternal life.

Describing a converted life, Paul wrote, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands mark the formal beginning of the Christian walk. But it is just the beginning. God washes away past sins and considers a person *a new creation*.

As a new creation, the Christian begins walking the narrow path by living a

new way—God’s way. At its heart and core, genuine Christianity is a way of life.

In the next chapter, we’ll explore the goal that must drive a converted Christian’s life.

Galatians 2:20: Genuine Christianity Summarized in One Verse

Paul penned a short statement that succinctly encapsulates Christianity:

“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.”

These words summarize what occurs in the life of a Christian upon baptism and the laying on of hands.

As Paul expressed it in Romans 6, the baptism ceremony symbolizes the death of the old self, buried in a watery grave—crucified with Christ. As Christ literally died, the old self figuratively dies at baptism. The individual who emerges from the water is a new person, cleansed from past sins and freed from their penalty.

When hands are laid on a believer, God’s Spirit enters him or her, beginning a new spiritual life. This is analogous to how physical life begins at conception. It marks the moment when God becomes the believer’s Father (Romans 8:16), imparting His mind and power, allowing Christ to live within the new Christian.

From that point forward, the Christian lives by the faith of the Son of God. The converted Christian develops the same faith and righteousness that characterized Jesus’ life.

This entire conversion process—from the death of the old self to the receiving of God’s Spirit—is made possible only through the sacrifice and life of “the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”



A Christian Builds Christ's Character

"You shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).

Some view Christianity as a one-time event or experience. However, the Bible shows that baptism and the laying on of hands are only the beginning. Genuine Christianity represents a lifelong commitment to living God's way.

The Bible contains hundreds of scriptures about living the Christian life. While we cannot cover them all here, this booklet will highlight some of the most fundamental principles that must guide a Christian's life.

But before delving into these principles, we must first consider the ultimate goal that every Christian should aim toward. This goal forms the framework for how a Christian lives.

Begin with the goal

A Christian's ultimate goal is to become like Jesus Christ and then, at His return, enter the Kingdom of God and receive eternal life as a member of God's family. Jesus instructed His disciples to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

The primary way Christians can seek first God's Kingdom is by making it their top priority and striving to live by God's righteous

instructions each day. The result is the development of character—not just any character, but the holy and righteous character of God Himself.

What exactly is holy, righteous character?

Godly character is built on understanding and embracing God's standards of right and wrong, choosing His way of life and, with the help of His Spirit, exercising self-discipline to consistently do what is right and reject what is wrong.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus expressed the goal this way: “Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).

Peter later reiterated this goal when he wrote, “But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Paul explained that a Christian's goal is to grow into “a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). In the same chapter, he emphasized that a Christian must “put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (verse 24).

God's character is perfect in righteousness and holiness—He consistently, without exception, thinks and acts in pristine moral perfection (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 145:17). His character *perfectly* embodies love, graciousness, mercy, justice, faithfulness and every other godly quality.

These scriptures present a lofty goal—complete moral perfection. A Christian's life goal is to *put on* God's character by diligently aligning his or her thoughts, words, actions and decisions entirely with God's.

Since humans are inherently flawed, this goal can seem unrealistic, overwhelming and even discouraging. How are we to properly understand Christ's mandate to become perfect?

Perfection in perspective

As we've already covered, the Bible describes the natural human mind as carnal—driven by self-interest and fleshly desires. We have all sinned and continue to struggle with carnality, which makes us inherently *imperfect*. So how should imperfect and flawed human beings understand Christ's directive to “be perfect”?

First, we must understand that baptism and receiving God's Spirit do not instantaneously grant a person flawless character. God does not implant holy, righteous character into a person's mind by fiat, like downloading a program onto a computer.

Instead, the character building that God requires of a Christian is a continuous *process*. Becoming a Christian through baptism and the laying on of hands is merely the *beginning* of a lifelong journey of overcoming sin and developing holy, righteous character.

When we examine the lives of God's most faithful servants, we see they still made mistakes and stumbled, even years after their calling. Paul, whom God used to write much of the New Testament, openly acknowledged his ongoing struggle with sin long after his calling and conversion (Romans 7:15-19, 22-24).

In his letter to the Philippians, written 25 to 30 years after his calling, Paul said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on" (Philippians 3:12). These four words encapsulate what a Christian's approach should be to pursuing perfection: "*but I press on.*"

Paul followed that by describing *how* he pressed on: "Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I *press* toward the goal" (verses 13-14).

Paul recognized that Christian character building is a lifelong process of forward-focused growth and development. While Christians will stumble and make mistakes, their overall trajectory should consistently reflect change and progress.

Late in his life, Peter admonished Christians to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). He also provided a detailed list of godly qualities that he urged them—and us—to "add" to their lives (2 Peter 1:5-7).

The apostle John underscored this point by stating that any Christian, including himself, who might think he or she has already achieved perfection is deceived. Instead, he explained that, as Christians, we must "confess our sins" and rely on God "to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-10).

Asking for forgiveness and spiritual help should be a daily part of a Christian's prayers.

The lifelong pursuit of perfection

In His letters to the seven churches, Christ continually identified Christians as *overcomers* (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21)—men and women constantly battling their personal weaknesses.

Putting this all together leads us to an encouraging yet sobering conclusion: A Christian is not someone who has achieved total moral perfection, but

someone who is committed to the lifelong process of pursuing, striving for and growing toward spiritual perfection.

Christians recognize their weaknesses but never become comfortable or tolerant of them. Instead, they tenaciously strive to overcome their sins and faults, relying on God's merciful forgiveness when they stumble and drawing strength from God's Spirit to continue growing.

They understand that complete perfection will be attained only when Christ returns and transforms them from weak flesh to perfect spirit. However, this knowledge does not deter them from vigorously pursuing perfection every day of their lives.

But how—in practical terms—does a Christian pursue spiritual perfection?

The broad answer is that godly character is developed by seeking to live by “every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Christians do this by studying the Bible and diligently applying its teachings to their lives.

But let's narrow it down further. The Bible offers much practical guidance for developing holy, righteous character. Let's examine some of its most essential teachings and how they can be applied to a Christian's daily life.

Godly love

The nucleus of God's character can be expressed in one word: *love*.

“He who does not love does not know God, for *God is love*” (1 John 4:8).

This verse reveals two profound truths. First, love is the essence of God's character. His nature and actions are so perfectly rooted in love that it literally defines Him. Second, to truly know God, one must develop this same characteristic.

Love is so essential that Jesus identified it as a defining trait of His true disciples: “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35).

Paul later wrote that Christians must “put on love, which is the bond of perfection” (Colossians 3:14). Since God is defined by perfect love and Christians are to become perfect like God, love is the ultimate characteristic they seek to develop.

Godly love is expressed through genuine, outgoing concern for the well-being of others. It's esteeming others above ourselves and striving to serve and sacrifice for them. While human nature is characterized by the selfish desire to get for the self, godly love is marked by the selfless desire to give.

Simply put, godly love is living a life characterized by *giving*.

Jesus clearly defined the specifics of how godly love should be directed: “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:37-39).

First and foremost, Christians demonstrate their love for God by obeying Him and prioritizing His ways above all else. Second, they show love for others by being attentive to their needs and seeking to serve and care for them.

Every Christian’s goal should be for love to drive and define every relationship, interaction, decision and aspect of his or her life.

Love may still feel like a broad and abstract concept. Thankfully, God’s Word offers further guidance and details on how to apply it, which brings us to the 10 Commandments.

The 10 Commandments

In Matthew 22, Jesus divided love into two categories—love toward God and love toward neighbor. How does a Christian practically show love toward God and human beings?

Thankfully, God provided commandments to show more about how to do this. Although they existed long before being given to Moses, God’s commandments are first listed in Exodus 20:1-17. They are not rigid laws imposed by a controlling God, but practical principles that teach us how to practice love on the human level.

Paul wrote, “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10). In other words, the intent of God’s law is to guide us in demonstrating love and genuine concern for others.

The first four of the 10 Commandments show us how to love God, while the last six show us how to love other people.

The first four commandments demonstrate that we love God by prioritizing Him above all else, not reducing Him to anything physical, honoring His name and dedicating the seventh day entirely to Him.

The last six commandments demonstrate that we love people by respecting the family structure God designed, not harming others, honoring marriage through faithfulness, respecting others’ property, speaking truthfully and refraining from coveting what is not rightfully ours.

The 10 Commandments define love and reflect God’s mind and character. Obeying them helps Christians grow closer to God, shaping their character to align with His.

The 10 Commandments also serve as spiritual guardrails. When we stay within them, they protect us from sinful thoughts and behaviors that oppose godly love. Christians rely on these guardrails in their daily decision-making, rejecting anything outside their boundaries and choosing only what falls safely within them.

God's commandments are not merely 10 suggestions or 10 helpful principles. They are the standards a Christian *must* strive to live by to be a Christian.

When the rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to have eternal life, Jesus' answer was simple and direct: "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19:16-17). Jesus also

said to His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned against the idea that He was coming to abolish any part of God's law, including the 10 Commandments (Matthew 5:17). In

In order to grow in perfect, holy and righteous character, Christians must be lifelong students of the most perfect, holy and righteous life that has ever been lived.

fact, He expanded on the commandments to show the spirit and intent of the law (see verses 21-48).

Considering these statements, we come to a powerful conclusion about the Christianity of the Bible: In order to be a Christian, one must endeavor to obey *all* of the 10 Commandments.

A sincere effort to obey God's laws is, in fact, a necessary precondition for receiving the Holy Spirit—which then empowers a person to obey the laws more completely (John 14:15-17; Acts 5:32).

That doesn't mean a Christian will obey them perfectly at all times. Sin is breaking the commandments, and all Christians stumble and sin (1 John 1:8). Thankfully, God offers His gracious forgiveness to Christians who stumble but then confess their sins and genuinely repent (Psalm 37:23-24; Proverbs 24:16).

Despite occasionally stumbling, Christians embrace *all* of the 10 Commandments and strive to obey them in their literal sense. They also

Is Keeping the Seventh-Day Sabbath Essential for Christians?

The Fourth Commandment instructs us to “remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8), identifying it as the seventh day of the week (verse 10; Genesis 2:1–3).

As discussed earlier, fourth-century Christianity altered many teachings of the early Church, including replacing the seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday. The Protestant reformers of the 16th century retained this change without question.

Can someone be a genuine Christian while rejecting the Fourth Commandment, which God said would be an enduring sign of His people (Exodus 31:13)?

Scripture teaches that obedience

to God’s commandments is a defining mark of a Christian. Jesus warned, “Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:19). James echoed this, stating that breaking a single commandment makes us guilty of breaking them all (James 2:10–11).

Christians must strive to obey all of God’s commandments, not pick and choose or modify them to their liking.

For example, could someone be a true Christian if he or she obeyed nine commandments but also prayed to the Hindu god Shiva? Could someone be a true Christian if he or she obeyed nine

seek to internalize the spirit of each law, embedding it into the fabric of their character.

For example, a Christian will not only avoid worshipping pagan gods but will also actively ensure that nothing—no person, object or desire—is prioritized above the true God. This reflects the intent of the First Commandment to put God above everything. Likewise, a Christian won’t simply refrain from cursing using God’s name but will seek to actively honor it in word and deed.

Similarly, Christians won’t just refrain from murdering others but will strive to be kind and generous toward all people, including their enemies. A Christian won’t just avoid adultery but will work

commandments but was also a serial adulterer? The answer to both questions is no.

Most would agree that someone who blatantly disobeys the First and Seventh Commandments can hardly claim to follow Jesus Christ.

However, could someone be a genuine Christian if he or she obeyed nine commandments but rejected the Fourth Commandment—God’s Sabbath? Based on the teachings of Jesus and James, the answer is also no.

To be a genuine Christian, one must obey *all* of God’s commandments, including the Fourth Commandment.

Jesus set a clear example of Sabbath-keeping throughout His life (Mark 1:21; 2:27–28; Luke 4:16). (Any time Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath by the religious authorities, they were

talking about the additional customs that men had added—not the actual biblical commandment.)

Therefore, faithful Christians will follow Jesus’ example by keeping the Sabbath holy and faithfully resting on the seventh day each week.

They don’t consider God’s Sabbath to be an onerous burden, but a delight. It is a day of spiritual rest and refreshment that Christians anticipate throughout the week. It gives them 24 hours to strengthen their relationship with God, learn from their Bible and grow closer to their brethren.

To learn more about the biblical Sabbath and annual festivals Jesus observed, download our free booklets ***The Sabbath: A Neglected Gift From God*** and ***From Holidays to Holy Days: God’s Plan for You***.

to nurture a loving marriage rooted in fidelity and selflessness.

Scripture after scripture in the apostles’ writings affirms Christ’s teaching that keeping the commandments is a defining characteristic of a true Christian.

John made this point unmistakably clear: “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” (1 John 2:3-4).

John’s words have a significant implication: To know God, one must obey His commandments. A person who rejects any or all of God’s commandments cannot legitimately be called a Christian.

In the same letter, John wrote, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). The 10 Commandments are not oppressive rules but a reflection of God’s character and provide a life of true freedom.

Follow the steps of Jesus Christ

A true Christian is a disciple and a follower of Jesus Christ.

That requires more than just a profession; it requires action. Jesus drove home this point when He condemned the act of brandishing His name while neglecting to *obey* His instructions: “Why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

A Christian hears Jesus’ teachings and seeks to apply them. In order to “do the things” He taught, one must *know* what He taught. This is why we recommend regularly studying the four Gospel accounts. Many Bibles highlight Jesus’ words in red letters, making it easy to focus on and study His direct teachings.

A Christian follows not only Jesus’ teachings but also His example—His very life. Jesus commanded His disciples and us today, “Learn from Me” (Matthew 11:29). The disciples took this to heart and later taught it to others.

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

Paul modeled his life after Christ’s example and encouraged others to follow his practice: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Peter highlighted this point when he wrote that Jesus left us “an example, that you should follow His steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

One of Jesus’ purposes in coming to earth was to perfectly model God’s way of living as a human being. His life was characterized by complete and perfect righteousness. He never transgressed a single commandment, but obeyed all of God’s commandments perfectly in both letter and spirit. He never spoke a foul word or made a selfish decision.

Christians seek to follow both His teachings and His lifestyle. They do this not through their own efforts alone but with the help of Christ living in them through the Holy Spirit (Galatians 2:20).

Though it’s impossible to cover every aspect, here are eight key elements of Jesus’ example highlighted in the New Testament:

- **Love.** Jesus treated His disciples with deep love and instructed them to love one another as He loved them (John 13:34; Ephesians 5:2).
- **Humility.** Jesus relinquished the privileges of divinity to come as a human, subject to the limitations and pains of the flesh (Philippians 2:7).

- **Sacrifice.** Jesus gave up His life to fulfill the greater purpose of His Father's plan (Matthew 16:24; Hebrews 12:2-3).
- **Service.** Jesus dedicated His life to serving others, demonstrating the importance of selfless service (Mark 10:45).
- **Forgiveness.** Even while enduring brutal torture, Jesus forgave His tormentors, teaching us to forgive those who wrong us (Luke 23:34; Colossians 3:13).
- **Foot washing.** By washing His disciples' feet during the final Passover of His human life, Jesus vividly demonstrated His willingness to serve others, no matter how lowly the task (John 13:14-15).
- **Obedience.** Jesus consistently prioritized the Father's will over His own, submitting fully to His plan and obeying His law (John 6:38; 15:10; Matthew 26:39; James 1:22).
- **Honoring holy time.** Jesus observed God's weekly and annual Sabbaths (Luke 4:16; Matthew 26:17-19; John 7:2, 20-24).

Christians understand their ultimate purpose is to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). They recognize that following His example is vital to being fully transformed into His likeness.

In order to grow in perfect, holy and righteous character, Christians must be lifelong students of the most perfect, holy and righteous life that has ever been lived.

Additional guidance for character building

So far in this chapter, we have explored three essential pillars for developing holy, righteous character: love, God's commandments and Christ's example. These pillars are deeply interconnected, each supporting and reinforcing the others.

We'll now consider two additional ways God's Word helps guide us in building character.

The examples of men and women of the Bible

Large portions of the Bible are dedicated to history, particularly the accounts of men and women God worked with throughout time. These stories are included not just to be historical records but to offer valuable lessons.

From the life stories of these individuals, we gain spiritual insights. We draw positive lessons from their triumphs and find cautionary warnings in their mistakes.

Hebrews 11, known as the Faith Chapter, highlights positive examples of men and women from the Old Testament. Their lives offer valuable spiritual lessons for Christians.

The author highlights Noah and Abraham as examples of faithfully acting on God's directives, teaching us to attentively obey God's Word. Isaac, Jacob and Joseph exemplified lives driven by hope in God's promises, teaching us to guide our lives by the hope of God's Kingdom. Rahab, despite her past, showed boldness in protecting God's servants, proving that anyone can rise above his or her past and take steps toward fulfilling God's will.

Hebrews 11 underscores the immense value of examining the lives of people of the past to draw lessons for living today.

In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul emphasizes cautionary lessons we can learn from those whose actions were far from exemplary. He examines the failures of the Israelites in the wilderness with whom "God was not well pleased" (verse 5). Paul highlights their lust, idolatry, sexual immorality, testing of God, complaining and overconfidence as warnings for Christians to avoid the same mistakes (verses 6-12).

Studying the lives of the men and women in God's Word—both their successes and failures—helps Christians avoid spiritual pitfalls and grow in holy, righteous character.

Character growth lists

Much of the Bible's direct teaching on character growth is found in the New Testament epistles, written by faithful apostles like Paul, Peter, James and John.

The apostles often outlined the character traits Christians must develop in the form of lists. These lists provide both goals to strive for and tools to identify weaknesses. Though we don't have space to cover all of the lists, here are some of the major ones:

The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Paul outlines nine traits that should grow in a life being led by the Holy Spirit. These traits reflect specific aspects of God's character. Paul refers to these as the *fruit* (singular) of the Spirit because all nine must be cultivated together. They are all essential.

The works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21)

Paul identifies 17 tendencies common in a life influenced by Satan, society and human nature. He calls these the *works* (plural) of the flesh, since they

don't manifest themselves identically in every person. Christians can use this list for self-examination, identifying areas of lingering carnality to focus on overcoming.

The armor of God (Ephesians 6:14-17)

Paul uses six pieces of Roman battle armor as an analogy for the spiritual tools available to help Christians overcome the attacks of Satan and the influences of this world.

Characteristics of godly love (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Embedded within Paul's famous Love Chapter are 15 examples of how a person motivated by godly love will and will not behave.

Characteristics needed for healthy relationships (Colossians 3:12-15)

Paul outlines 10 characteristics converted Christians should embody in their interactions with fellow believers. By practicing these traits, Christians promote peace and harmony in their personal lives and within the Church.

Characteristics of godly thinking (Philippians 4:8)

Paul lists eight qualities that should guide a Christian's thinking. This shows that God is concerned about not only our actions, but also our inner thoughts and attitudes.

Characteristics of a mature Christian (2 Peter 1:5-7)

Peter outlines eight spiritual traits that Christians must develop as they grow and mature in God's way of life. This list serves as a valuable tool for assessing our progress in developing holy, righteous character.

The wisdom from above (James 3:17)

James identifies eight pillars of wisdom that should be evident in the life of a Christian who seeks God's guidance for understanding, discernment and decision-making.

Ways to be good examples (Titus 2:2-10)

Paul addresses different groups within the Church, highlighting ways each can serve as a positive example to others. His guidance emphasizes that Christians should be mindful of their conduct and example toward believers and nonbelievers.

Christians can use these lists as a guide for personal Bible study by exploring the meaning of each quality, finding supporting scriptures and studying how Christ and others demonstrated them.

A lifetime of growth

In this chapter, we have explored many of the characteristics God expects Christians to develop. These traits won't be perfected instantly—they require a lifetime to build, strengthen and refine. There will always be room for growth as long as we are human.

Of course, God does not expect us to develop godly character entirely on our own. He offers help and guidance through His Word and the power of His Holy Spirit. Christians regularly turn to God in prayer, seeking His strength to change and grow as they walk the narrow path.

How Should a Christian Interact With the World?

The society around us poses many spiritual dangers. We live in a world deeply influenced by Satan and his way of thinking (Ephesians 2:2; Revelation 12:9). Jesus identified the “pleasures of life” (Luke 8:14) as one of the reasons people often walk away from God’s calling.

Understanding this, some have attempted to escape the world’s influences by physically isolating themselves from society. Professing Christian groups have practiced various forms of separatism, from monastic orders to isolated communal compounds. But is physical isolation what God

desires? Is this God's solution to the problem of worldliness?

Jesus revealed the correct approach in His prayer for His disciples (past and future) in John 17:15: "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one." He did not call for Christians to completely remove themselves from society but prayed for the Father's strength to protect them from its influences.

The correct approach Christians should have to this world can be expressed succinctly: *in it, not of it*.

In it. Instead of completely isolating themselves, Christians are to be positive examples in all their interactions with the world. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). Christians let their light shine by demonstrating God's way through their speech, work ethic, honesty and overall integrity.

Not of it. Though they don't

sever themselves entirely from living in the world, Christians seek to remain spiritually undefiled by it. They resist the negative influences of society and endeavor to be spiritually and morally different. Paul expressed it this way: "Do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2).

Christians will seek to keep themselves "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27). Christians recognize the danger of negative and harmful influences and distance themselves from them (Psalm 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:17). They also sorrow for the troubles mankind faces because of sin (Luke 19:41-44; Ezekiel 9:4).

To sum up: Christians live in the world and seek to set a positive example through their integrity. At the same time, they are vigilant to avoid becoming entangled in its ways. They seek to ensure that their influence on the world is greater than its influence on them.

Be in it, but not of it!



A Christian Is Consistent and Steadfast

“But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

Earlier in this booklet, we referenced Revelation 17:14, which outlines three steps in the Christian calling: “called, chosen, and faithful.”

A Christian is someone God *calls* to Himself. He or she must then *choose* to respond to that calling. We now consider the final step in the process: remaining *faithful*.

Christianity is not a one-time event or something reserved for holidays or times of crisis. It isn’t for the casual religious hobbyist. It is a lifelong commitment to remain faithful until one’s final breath.

Jesus underscored the gravity of the calling: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). Following Christ requires self-sacrifice and fully surrendering oneself to God’s will every day.

It is a way of life that demands commitment and unwavering consistency.

Walking the narrow path day by day

While all Christians stumble at times, God is immensely patient and offers forgiveness. Ultimately, faithful Christians pursue a lifelong trajectory of growth, approaching each day with a renewed commitment to being spiritually stronger than the day before.

How can people practice genuine Christianity on a daily basis?

- They pray to God and study His Word continually, recognizing these are essential tools for staying connected to God (Psalm 119:105; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Matthew 4:4).
- They use God's law as their guiding standard, thoughtfully evaluating every choice and action to ensure they align with the letter and spirit of God's law (Psalm 119:1-2; James 1:25).
- They remain in control of their thoughts and attitudes, intentionally focusing on godly thinking (Philippians 4:8). They frequently think about the Kingdom of God and Christ's righteousness (Matthew 6:33).
- They will reflect godly love in their interactions with others, treating all people with kindness, fairness and respect (1 Corinthians 16:14; 1 Peter 2:17).
- They are acutely aware of the importance of setting a good example to all people (Luke 6:31; 1 Peter 2:12).
- They do their best to set a consistent pattern of good works in their daily life (Titus 2:7).
- They support and contribute to the work of proclaiming Christ's gospel to the world (Matthew 28:19-20). True Christians are coworkers, supporting each other through fellowship and worship together.

Understandably, some may feel a tinge of guilt reading this, realizing they aren't consistently doing all these things. Our goal is not to discourage, but to provide a clear guide for moving forward on the narrow path.

Walking the narrow path to the end

Some churches promote an idea known as eternal security, often expressed as "once saved, always saved." This belief asserts that once a person becomes a Christian, his or her eternal salvation is guaranteed, making it impossible to fall away.

That idea is not biblical and undermines an essential quality God requires: endurance.

The Scriptures encourage Christians to diligently remain steadfast to the end of their lives. Jesus declared, "He who *endures to the end* shall be

saved” (Matthew 24:13). He said this in the context of end-time prophecies warning of two challenges to endurance—religious deception and lawlessness (verses 11-12).

Christians must endure and remain faithful. This is especially difficult in a world filled with influences seeking to lead them astray. Endurance is absolutely critical to receiving eternal life (Hebrews 3:14).

As the world grows increasingly dark, dedicated Christians must be ever

Christianity is characterized by courage, consistency and endurance. All three are driven by the hope and vision of God’s coming Kingdom.

more serious to “hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering” (Hebrews 10:23). There are many temptations that can lure Christians off the narrow path. Only those

who endure temptation will receive eternal life (James 1:12).

However, it’s not just the external pressures of the world that can hinder one from enduring to the end. Paul warned of an internal danger: growing weary and losing heart (Galatians 6:9). Discouragement and spiritual fatigue can cause a person to abandon the narrow path.

The letters to the seven churches of Revelation warn God’s people of losing their “first love” (Revelation 2:4). The solution to this threat is to remain continually focused on repentance and overcoming (verses 5, 7). Those who cease taking sin seriously and fail to zealously resist temptation are at the greatest risk of giving up.

Understanding the lifelong commitment Christianity demands is crucial for those on the narrow path and those considering it. Before committing, one must carefully consider if he or she is ready to walk it faithfully for life.

This is why Jesus urged us to “*count the cost*” before following Him (Luke 14:28).

Why you should pursue biblical Christianity

As we conclude this booklet, we’ll consider the question of *why*.

If God is calling you to walk the narrow path of genuine Christianity, *why* should you endure the trials and difficulties of the Christian life? *Why*

should you walk away from old habits and lifestyles? *Why* should you dedicate the rest of your life to following the example of Jesus Christ?

To this point, we have focused on the biblical requirements for being a Christian. However, it's also important to reflect on the immense blessings that come from the Christian walk—today and in the life to come.

Though a Christian will face hardship and trials, Jesus promises His way is the path to an abundant and joy-filled life (John 10:10; 13:17).

Living by God's laws provides blessings and frees us from worrying about many of our world's worst dangers and suffering. God's law is called "the perfect law of *liberty*" (James 1:25).

For instance, a Christian who faithfully obeys the Seventh Commandment and remains loyal to his or her spouse avoids the heartache and anguish caused by adultery. Many of life's greatest problems are self-inflicted and stem from ignoring God's laws. Obedience, on the other hand, brings peace and clarity to a Christian's life.

Those who walk the Christian path learn that genuine happiness is found in a life driven by outgoing concern for others. Those who practice the "give" way of life experience the truth of Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving brings blessings and makes us happier.

Genuine Christians can testify to the fact that the "give" way is not only the right way—but undeniably the best and most fulfilling way to live.

However, the greatest blessing of true Christianity comes beyond this life. God is calling steadfast Christians to eternal life in His family.

They will share a close relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ for eternity and "inherit all things" (Revelation 21:7). They will be elevated to God's level of existence (1 John 3:2) and reign as kings and priests in His Kingdom, helping others to learn and live genuine Christianity (Revelation 5:10).

If we respond to His calling, God has an astounding future in store for us—a future that is beyond anything we humans can imagine. It will make every sacrifice and trial of the Christian life worth it.

Courage, consistency and endurance

A Christian is driven by hope and desire for eternal life in God's Kingdom. In one of his final letters, Paul summed up how hope motivated him to endure to the end:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the

Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Everything Paul did—fighting spiritual battles, enduring, holding tightly to the truth—was driven by his desire for Christ to return and establish the Kingdom of God. That should describe the life of every man or woman called to walk the narrow path.

Christianity is characterized by courage, consistency and endurance. All three are driven by the hope and vision of God’s coming Kingdom.

If you already practice genuine Christianity, we hope this study has been a valuable review to help you grow and strengthen your commitment to God’s calling.

If you are new to this way of life, we hope this booklet has inspired and motivated you. If God is calling you, we pray you’ll have the courage and faith to respond. It won’t always be easy, but it is more than worth every hardship and sacrifice.

True, biblical Christianity is the only path to true fulfillment in this life and to the glorious future of eternal life in the world to come.

Are you ready to begin walking the narrow path?

Epilogue

What Should You Do Now?

If this publication resonated with you and you feel compelled to pursue the narrow path, here are five action steps to help guide you forward:

- 1. Keep learning and studying.** This booklet covered many of the Bible's teachings, but it is not a complete guide to everything it teaches. To learn more about the Bible's fundamental teachings, enroll in our free, self-paced [*Life, Hope & Truth Bible Study Course*](#).
- 2. Learn more about repentance and baptism.** If you feel convinced that God is calling you, explore two essential steps to the narrow path: repentance and baptism. To learn more about these topics, read our free booklets [*Change Your Life*](#) and [*God's Gift of Grace*](#). Additionally, Lesson 10 of the *Bible Study Course* covers repentance and baptism in considerable depth.
- 3. Learn more about the practical aspects of the Christian walk.** This booklet covered many fundamentals of how a Christian should live daily. For a deeper dive on the practical application of these principles, read [*God's 10 Commandments: Still Relevant Today*](#) and [*The Sermon on the Mount*](#). Additionally, our free book [*Five Tools for Spiritual Growth*](#) offers guidance on using the tools God provides to help Christians grow closer to Him.
- 4. Learn more about your ultimate purpose.** Christianity is not just for this life—it is the first step toward fulfilling the greater

purpose for which God created you. To learn more about that purpose and the future God is planning, read *God's Purpose for You* and *The World to Come: What It Will Be Like*.

5. **Connect with the Church of God.** The Christian calling isn't one of isolation. God calls Christians to be part of a larger body tasked with preaching the gospel and fostering spiritual growth through education, service and fellowship. To learn more about the biblical characteristics of God's true Church, read *Where Is the Church Jesus Built?* For an inside look into the organization behind this booklet, read *Welcome to the Church of God, a Worldwide Association*.



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LifeHopeandTruth.com exists to fill a critical void in this world: the lack of understanding about the purpose of life, the lack of realistic hope for a better future and the lack of truth!

Neither religion nor science has satisfactorily addressed these issues, so people today are of divided opinions, confused or, worst of all, don't care anymore. The ancient words of the prophet Isaiah ring so true today: "Truth is fallen in the street." Why? Is it because God was right when He warned that humans are inclined to reject Him and usually choose not to know Him?

We are here for people who are searching for answers, who are ready to prove all things or who are hungry for more than what they've been taught most of their lives about God, the Bible, the meaning of life and how to live. We want to help you truly understand the good news of the gospel and fulfill Jesus Christ's admonition to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

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