



Reflections on Living a Christian Life

As time flies by, it is good to stop and think on all the blessings God has given to us. I want to share a few of the truths I have learned in my 62 years since I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior at the young age of 12. I want to share some of the successes and wisdom I have gained from all these years walking with Jesus Christ and being led by the Holy Spirit.

Probably the greatest advantage a person can have in this life is to know Christ as their own personal savior. Once the Holy Spirit comes inside and dwells with you, never again are you truly alone. Christ is there to help us each day and to pick us up when we fail. And due to our fleshly condition, we will fail.

I was blessed to have Christian parents. No one ever loved her children any more than my mother did, and my dad was excellent in teaching us to be disciplined and to work hard. To

learn discipline is crucial to success in life. I believe that living a disciplined life is the strongest form of self-love.

God's word provides instructions on the right way to live. I start my day in the word of God and I end it in reading the word. No matter the situation, God speaks to me through his word. I have learned that no matter what happens, you need to just trust God. Don't question him, just trust Him. He has a reason for all things that happen to you.

Psa 27:14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.

Be careful to live a free life. There are thousands of ways to be under bondage, but to walk with Christ and to live His way is total freedom. I want to be free of sin and the ways of the world which are not to my good.

*1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which **according to his abundant mercy** hath begotten us again unto a **lively hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

1Pe 1:4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

1Pe 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Do All to the Glory of God

1Co 10:23 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.

1Co 10:24 Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.

1Co 10:25 Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:

1Co 10:26 For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof.

The world teaches us to look out for yourself. We are told that we are number 1 and you must concentrate on what you want. After years of living like that, I have learned it is not true at all. As a matter of fact, putting others first is God's way of living. Base your life on

the example of Jesus Christ. He had nothing in this world, but lived the exact perfect life in the will of the Father.

For years I believed that if I followed the world's teachings and got the right credit score and the right credit cards, I would have success. All of that is a lie from Satan. Freedom comes from doing things God's way.

We do not need to do things based on worldly teachings. Satan knows our weaknesses and will use them against us. We are bombarded with advertisements that we must have 'their thing' to be happy. We must shut out the noise and listen to God.

For years I heard that the normal person could never retire well, or that you will always have a house payment and a car payment. That might be true for some, but with God's help and some financial control, we now have a paid for home and haven't had a car payment in 25 years. But I didn't do it on my own. It took some guidance and faith in the Lord.

When I was 49 years old, I started hearing Dave Ramsey talk about finances on the radio. Many people hate his teachings, as he believes a person should do things God's way and pay for things in cash. He is not shy in explaining how that financial issues are due to the person in the mirror.

Some don't like his direct teachings, but being hardheaded and stubborn, I needed that. It was me causing the problems in my younger years. No one was going to come save me from poor financial discipline. Initially I fought to keep doing things my way, but finally gave up after several more years of failures and frustrations.

If we trust God, we should trust him in all things. You must pay your tithes to the Lord if you want a happy and contented life. Live within your means, knowing God will supply your every need. Paul explained that in his letter to the church at Philippi and told of how he had learned to live.

God's Provision

Php 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Php 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

Php 4:11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

Php 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Php 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

God gives rules about money in the bible. These are Dave Ramsey's basic principles, but they are not accepted by most. The rules are not complex or difficult.

Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

Pro 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.

As we started down this simpler path of living, things got easier each year. I started studying Minimalism and found it is a good logical way to live. You don't need to bring in more and more and pay out volumes of money to store extra things in storage buildings.

I came across the book Walden by Henry David Thoreau which tells of his study on living simply out on Lake Walden. His book is full of wise quotes.

He said that the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. Never slowing down and thinking things out the way God intended.

Henry David Thoreau used an axe to cut down trees and built a small cabin to live in for under \$100. He wanted to show that doing things in a simple fashion could be done with no liability to anyone else.

His point is that many people are not free, but the things hold them in bondage. A person with a big farm may look well off, but if the farm controls your life, you are not free. By raising a garden, he found he could live on 13 weeks of wages per year, and have the other 52 weeks to read and relax and do what he wanted.

One of his quotes in the book is this:

For a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

Think on that:

For a man is rich in proportion to the number of things which he can afford to let alone.

But I would say to my fellows, once for all, as long as possible, live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail. You are still committed.

His simple teachings have changed my way of thinking. I read this book once every year to keep my thinking right. And to keep my focus away from the world, I watch Dave Ramsey on You Tube most every night.

One last thing to point out. You can't please everyone. Your focus needs to be on pleasing God and doing your best. The Lord desires for us to get along, but if a person is unreasonable, pray about it and then turn it over to God. Be thankful you have a church where people understand your trials and pray for you and you pray for them.

1Pe 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

1Pe 4:9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

1Pe 4:10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

So in summary, I would say my top 5 takeaway pieces of advice are:

1. Trust God no matter what. Lean not to your own understanding but seek God's wisdom.

Pro 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

Pro 3:6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Pro 3:7 Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.

2. Don't try to keep up with the Jones. Whatever you have, be happy and content in that status like Paul's example in Philippians.

3. Read and learn. I read that 90% of college graduates don't read another meaningful book after they graduate. Study and grow, and most of all, study your bible.

4. Think positive thoughts. Your brain has a part that is being programmed every day. One negative thought takes 3 positive thoughts to overcome. Our brain is wired to look for the negative. Overwhelm your mind with the promises of God and don't let negativity affect you.

4. Don't trust the world, advertising and lies. Satan is a liar, but God never lies or misleads us.

5. Get right with God every night. FORGET FAILURES and live for God the best you can. I probably have prayed for forgiveness now over 20,000 times. I am not happy with any failure, and try to learn from it and not repeat the same thing. But I don't stress about it, and I press forward each day to serve God with a peaceful heart and mind.

Php 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

Php 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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