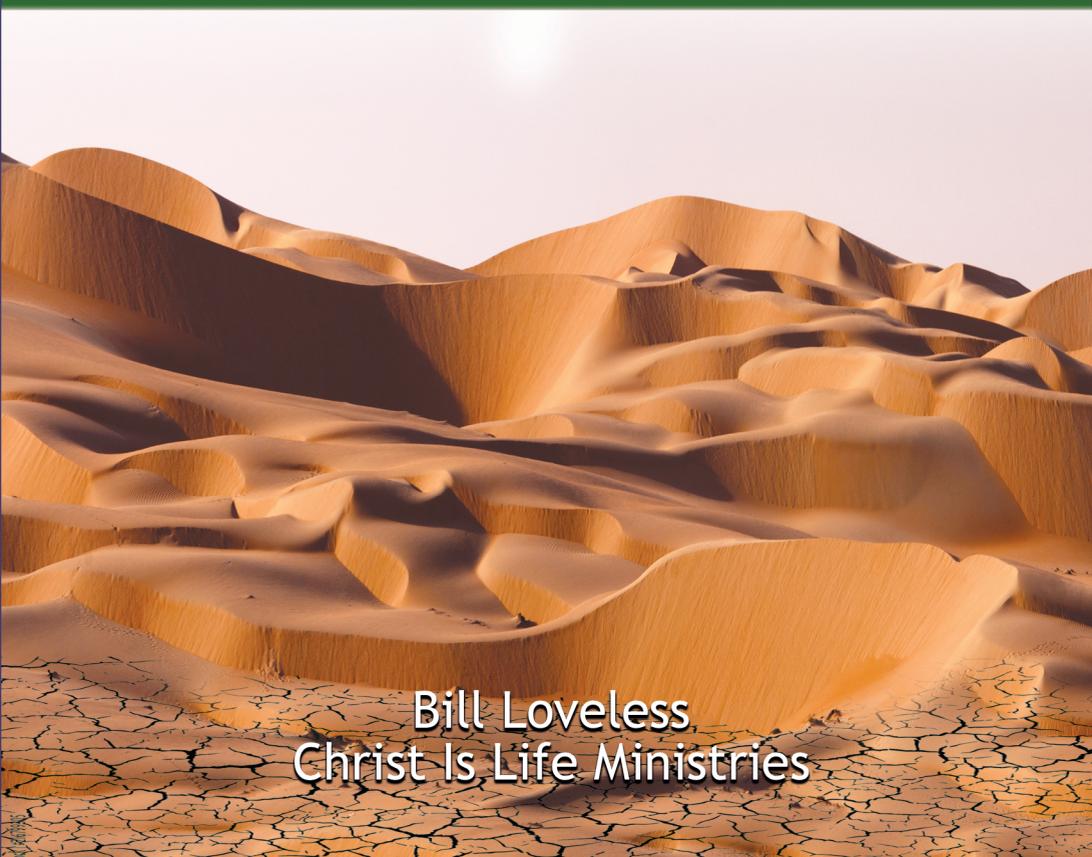


Are You Living  
Above The Line?



Bill Loveless  
Christ Is Life Ministries

# **Are You Living Above The Line?**

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**Bill Loveless**

**Christ Is Life Ministries**

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## Introduction

Life is about choices. We make them every day. We know from experience, if we make the wrong choices we can suffer the consequences of those choices. However, what if we don't even know the choice? What if we have made decisions based on the wrong choice because we didn't know the right one?

Let me give you a personal example. Concerning my Christian life, I thought I was making the right choices about how I am to live the Christian life until I discovered 30 years later that I was living a Christian life that was destined to fail. Why?

My desire, I hope like yours, was spiritual freedom my fleshly behaviors, healing from my past woundedness from my father and spiritual transformation because those are some of God's promises. However, since I did not know the right choice, I continued in my bondage to fear, anxiety, rejection and unworthiness. There was no healing from the woundedness created by my father's abuse and there was no spiritual transformation.

It wasn't until someone presented me with the right/truthful choice that I realized why my Christian life was not working and why I was failing to live it. Therefore, in this booklet we will talk about "right" choices and key truths that will result in freedom, victory, healing and spiritual transformation.

# CHAPTER ONE

## The Foundational Truth For Living Above The Line

### Living “A” Christian Life Versus Living “THE” Christian Life

#### Living “A” Christian Life

Let me begin by defining what I mean by “A” Christian life.

***“A” Christian Life:***

***What YOU, as the SOURCE, need to DO using YOUR intellect, ability, willpower, and self-discipline, with God’s HELP to try to SUCCESSFULLY live the Christian life.***

The key word in this definition is the word “source.” YOU being the source means it is up to you to make your Christian life and your life in general work. To better understand, let’s look at some characteristics of what it means to live “A” Christian life.

#### Characteristics of “A” Christian life

“A” Christian life is one where you are using your own intellect, ability, willpower, self-discipline, and asking God’s help, to:

1. Learn the word of God and do what it says.
2. Keep God’s rules and commands.
3. Change or transform yourself.
4. Become more righteous (i.e., sin less).

5. Change your fleshly or sinful behavior to Christ-like behavior.
6. Set yourself free from the sin(s) you are in bondage to.
7. Imitate Christ to be Christ-like.
8. Achieve victory over your flesh and Satan.
9. Experience the abundant life Jesus promised.

Have you tried to accomplish any of the things listed above? If so, have you been consistently and progressively experiencing success in doing these things in your Christian walk? If not, why do you believe that is the case?

Is it perhaps because you need to try harder to do them or is it possible that you were never intended to accomplish any of these things using your ability, intellect, willpower, and self-discipline? I tried for over 30 years to successfully accomplish that list and I consistently failed. Why? Is it possible that I was believing a lie?

### **What Is The Truth About Living “A” Christian Life?**

Here is the truth about living “A” Christian life:

***Living “A” Christian life will NEVER produce the Christian life that God promises, (i.e., a life of victory, freedom, healing and transformation.)***

In fact, if you continue to live “A” life, it will result in:

- More frustration
- More failure
- More defeat
- More bondage
- More disillusionment
- More inner turmoil
- More of the same or worse (i.e., no change or transformation)

If this is where you are in your Christian journey, is it possible that you may be living “A” Christian life? If so, ask yourself this question.

***Is this the life God INTENDED for me to live, or is there ANOTHER life I am to experience?***

You see, friend, God never intended for us to live “A” Christian life because His plan and design for us is for us to live “THE” Christian life. So, let’s take a look at the meaning of “THE” Christian Life.

### **What Is “THE” Christian Life?**

I discovered the truth about the Christian life after living from a false belief for over 30 years. I realized the truth when a man by the name of Ian Thomas, who was director of a national organization called Torchbearers, came and spoke at our church. The first words out of his mouth were:

*“God never intended for you to live THE life that only Christ can live in and through you.”*

These were powerful words because for the first time I realized that only Christ, not me, can live THE Christian life. If these are new words to you, like they were to me that day, let me share with you the meaning of THE Christian life.

### **What Jesus Says Is “THE” Christian Life**

Jesus says:

*“...I AM the way, the truth, and **THE LIFE**...” John 14:6*

*“...I AM the resurrection and **THE LIFE**.” John 11:25*

What is Jesus saying in these two passages? It is clear that Jesus is saying that He Himself is **THE** Life. What does He mean when He says that He is **THE** Life? For many years, I read these verses and concluded that they only meant that He was the source for my eternal life when I trusted in Him for salvation. However, what Jesus is clearly telling us in these two passages is this:

***“THE” Christian Life is a PERSON.***

***It is Christ HIMSELF!***

Think about the above statement for a moment. If Christ Himself is the Christian life, then THE Christian life is not about trying to live the Christian life through self-effort with God’s help. Rather, THE Christian life is a Person. Have you heard this before? To further confirm this truth let’s look at what Paul has to say.

### **What Paul Says About Living “THE” Christian Life**

Paul took the truth of Christ as “THE” Life to a more personal level when he said in Colossians 3:4:

***“...Christ who is YOUR life ...”***

What is Paul saying in this verse? He is saying that the life of Christ is more than the eternal life that He gave you at salvation. He is saying that Christ is **your** life today, at this very moment. At this point you might be scratching your head and asking these questions: “What is Paul talking about? What does it mean that Christ is my life? Is the life that Paul is referring to ‘THE’ Christian life?” I believe that the answer to these questions is found in Philippians 1:21 when Paul says:

***“For me, to live IS CHRIST....”***

Paul is saying that Christ is THE Christian life. Think about this for a moment. If “THE” Christian life is a Person, does that mean “THE” Christian life is not about completing a checklist, trying to keep a set of rules, trying to keep from sinning, or trying to do the best you can to live for God?

You see Jesus and Paul are saying the same thing that Ian Thomas said to me that day: God intended for you to live THE Christian life, not “A” Christian life. Think about this following statement:

***All that we can do in our own strength and ability is live “A” FORM of the Christian life. ONLY Christ can live “THE” Life in and through us.***

**Question:** How do you know which life you are living? If you are not being set free from your fleshly behaviors, being healed of any past woundedness or being spiritually transformed might that be a sign that you are living “A” life?

### **What Does It Mean For Christ To BE Your Life?**

To answer this question let’s look at 1 Corinthians 1:30:

***“He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ Jesus, ...” (RSV)***

God gives us the answer in the first part of the verse when He says that He is the SOURCE of your life in Christ. Remember in our definition of “A” Christian life, YOU are the source to try and live the Christian life. However, what Paul is saying is that Jesus, not you, is the Source to live THE Christian life.

The word “source” in this context means a person from whom something originates. In this verse, that person is Jesus who is the originator of THE Life. Look at two other verses that confirm that God is your Source for living the Christian life:

***"In Him we live and move and have our being."** Acts 17:28*

***"For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things...."***  
*Romans 11:36*

These are just two of many verses in the Bible that reveal to us that Christ is to be our Source for living THE Christian life.

## **What Does It Mean Practically For Christ To Be Your Source**

Another definition of "source" means "producer." What will Christ as our Source produce.

**VICTORY** – Christ is your Source to produce experiential victory over your sin strongholds and fleshly behaviors.

*"... but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 15:57*

**FREEDOM** – Christ is your Source to set you free from your false beliefs, your defeating sin patterns, and your ongoing inner struggles.

*"So, Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law."*  
*Galatians 5:1*

**HEALING** – Christ is your Source for healing of your past and present woundedness.

*Jesus \*said to him, "I will come and heal him." Matthew 8:7*

**TRANSFORMATION** – Christ is your Source to transform you into His likeness.

*"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:18*

If we are the source in living “A” Christian life, we will never produce God’s promises.

At this point it may still be unclear what it means for Christ to be THE Life. I understand. It took me awhile to understand as well. However, the rest of this book is designed to reveal practically what it means for Christ to be THE Life in you. Would you agree that with us being the source that we can’t produce the freedom, victory, healing and transformation that God promises? This is why Paul said at the beginning of Galatians 2:20:

*“I am crucified with Christ and I no longer live but  
Christ (THE Life) lives in me....”*

When Paul says, “I no longer live,” he is admitting that he can’t live THE Christian life either. Only Christ THE life living in him can live it.

In the next chapter we will look at living “A” life versus “THE” Life using an illustration called “The Line.”

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Line and Christ-Likeness

#### The Line

To illustrate the difference between “A” Christian life and “THE” Christian life look at the line illustration below.

**ABOVE**

**“THE” Christian Life**

---

**BELOW**

**“A” Christian Life**

Living above the line means living THE Christian life while living below the line means “A” Christian life. This illustration presents us with two choices. Let’s look at the results of those two choices.

**“THE” Christian Life**

**Experiencing God’s Promises Of:**

**Victory  
Freedom  
Healing  
Transformation**

---

**“A” Christian Life**

**Experiencing:**

**Defeat  
Bondage  
No Healing  
No Transformation**

Living from Christ as our Source, THE Life, we can and will experience God's promises such as victory, freedom, healing of our woundedness and transformation. However, living "A" life below the line will only produce more defeat, bondage and no healing or transformation.

I know this is true because for 30 years of living A Christian life, I was not experiencing any of the promises listed above. Only until I began seeking the Holy Spirit for revelation of THE Life, did I began to understand what it meant and as a result, I started to choose to live above the line from THE Life with the result that God's promises became an experiential reality.

Next let's look at the line in regards to our spiritual transformation.

## **The Line and Spiritual Transformation**

### **What Is Spiritual Transformation?**

*"And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, **are being transformed into His (Christ) likeness** with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit."*

*2 Corinthians 3:18*

The biblical word for "transformed" is "metamorphoo." It means **"a change of the form or nature of a person into a completely different person by supernatural means."** Think about this definition for a moment. Isn't this what you desire? I believe we all do because we all have things about ourselves, we don't like (i.e. our fleshly behaviors, sinful attitudes, etc.) and want changed.

God promises us that we can be transformed into Christ-likeness according to 2 Corinthians 3:18. Therefore, let's look at the biblical meaning of Christ-likeness.

## The Biblical Meaning of CHRIST-LIKENESS

What is the meaning of Christ-likeness?

***Christ-likeness is living FROM and EXPERIENCING the SUPERNATURAL characteristics of Christ.***

Remember Paul's words in Philippians 1:21?

*"For to live to me is Christ (likeness)."*

What Paul meant is that he was living from the supernatural characteristics of Christ (i.e. Christ-likeness). Let's look at some of the Christ-like characteristics.

### Characteristics of Christ-Likeness

Below is a list of some of the characteristics of Christ.

Unconditional Love	Victory	Worth/Value	Peace
Acceptance	Freedom	Patience	Humility
Forgiveness	Strength	Security	Rest
Understanding	Wisdom	Adequacy	Hope
Christ-confidence	Discernment	Courage	Joy
Righteousness	Compassion	Faithfulness	Power
Other's focused	Boldness	Selflessness	Faith
Christ-control	Gentleness	Goodness	Sacrificial

***These characteristics are the MAKEUP of who Christ IS.  
(i.e. He IS unconditional love)***

The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23 is a great example of Christ-likeness.

***"But the fruit of the Spirit is [Christ's] love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...."***

Have you ever thought about the fruit of the Spirit being who Christ is? The fruit is not something we produce. Rather, it is who Christ IS in us. Look at the next section to further explain.

**Question:** From the list of Christ-like characteristics on the previous page, which one(s) would you like to experience the most?

### **A Key Truth About Christ-Likeness**

Here is a key truth we need to understand about Christ-likeness.

***Christ-like characteristics are the DIVINE  
MAKEUP of Christ Himself.***

We see a perfect example of this in Ephesians 2:14.

*“For He [Christ] Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall.”*

We often pray, “Lord, give me peace, humility, etc. However, Christ is not a divine pharmacist giving you those things, He IS those things. A key phrase when it comes to Christ-likeness is “I AM.” Here are some examples to better understand.

- I AM your acceptance.
- I AM your humility.
- I AM your selflessness.
- I AM your strength.

Therefore, we no longer have to ask Christ, for example, to GIVE us peace. Rather, we simply trust Him to BE our peace.

### **What Is The DIFFERENCE Between Christ-Like Characteristics and Human Characteristics?**

Since we live in the human realm where we can experience human feelings of love, joy, peace, patience, security, etc., it is

important to differentiate between human and Christ-like characteristics.

**HUMAN Characteristics** – feelings or experiences generated by man that CAN be changed by our circumstances and/or our relationships.

Let's assume, for example, that you are having a good day. You are feeling peace, joy, and security. However, you come home to find that someone has broken into your house, your house is flooded due to a broken pipe, and your two-year old son is throwing a temper tantrum.

What happens to your human feelings of peace, joy, and security? They evaporate quickly because human feelings are subject to change. How do human feelings differ from living from Christ-likeness?

**CHRIST-LIKE Characteristics** – supernatural characteristics of Christ that CANNOT be changed by circumstances or relationships.

Using the same example as above, let's assume that instead of walking in human peace, joy, etc., you are walking in Christ-like joy, peace, etc. When you are faced with the robbery, the flooding, and the crying child, none of these things rob you of Christ's peace, Christ's joy, or Christ's patience.

Let's look at a biblical example to further explain. Look at what the apostle Paul experienced in 2 Corinthians 11:24, 25:

*“Five times I received from the Jews **thirty-nine lashes**. **Three times I was beaten with rods**, **once I was stoned**, **three times I was shipwrecked**, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.”*

In spite of all this, look at what he says in 2 Corinthians 12:10:

*“Therefore, I am **well content** with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”*

Despite the persecution that Paul went through, he says that he is “well content.” We know this was not a human feeling of contentment because it is nearly impossible to experience human contentment when we are suffering like Paul did. Paul was experiencing a supernatural Christ-like contentment that even suffering could not rob him of. Therefore, let’s sum up the difference between a human and a Christ-like characteristic.

***The KEY difference between a HUMAN characteristic and a CHRIST-LIKE characteristic is that neither relationships nor adverse circumstances can ROB you of experiencing Christ-like characteristics.***

**[Note:** Becoming Christ-like does not mean we are becoming deity. It means that we can experience Christ-like attitudes as the Holy Spirit transforms us into Christ-likeness.]

### **Key Truths About Christ-Likeness**

Before we go on, let’s look at four key truths concerning Christ-likeness.

#### **1. We contain ALL of the Christ-like characteristics.**

Since Christ is in you, how much of Christ’s love, joy, acceptance, etc., do you contain? The answer: ALL of it. How do we know? Look at Colossians 2:9, 10 for the answer:

***“For in Him [Christ] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him [Christ] you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”***

Since we have the fullness of Christ in us and we have been made complete, we contain all of the Christ-like characteristics in full. Not only are they given to us in full, they are inexhaustible. We have a never-ending supply of Christ’s love, peace, forgiveness, etc.

## **2. We no longer have to TRY to produce these characteristics.**

Have you ever been taught that it is up to you to produce the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23 (i.e., love, joy, peace, patience, etc.)? However, since you now contain all the fruit of the Spirit (i.e., Christ-like characteristics) in Christ, you no longer have to try to produce what you already have in Christ and could not in your own strength produce anyway.

That should be freedom for you if you have believed it is up to you to produce the fruit of the Spirit in your own strength and ability. Look at what Jesus says in John 6:51:

***“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven;  
if anyone **eats** of this bread...”***

He says, “I am the living bread” and all you have to do is eat. You don’t have to prepare it. Just eat of it. In like manner, we don’t have to produce Christ-likeness. We simply have to “eat” (live from Christ-likeness) from Christ who is the bread of Life.

## **3. These Christ-like characteristics are designed to meet ALL of your needs.**

***“And my God will meet **all of your needs** according to His glorious riches **in Christ.**”*** *Philippians 4:19*

When Paul says that all of our needs are met in Christ, part of what he is referring to is Christ-likeness. Take a moment and look back at the list on page 14.

When you look at the list, is there anything on that list that you don’t need? This is crucial because we are tempted to try and get our needs met on our own or look to others to meet our needs. This is most true in the marriage relationship when we look for “unconditional” love, acceptance, value/worth, etc., from the other spouse who is only capable of providing “conditional-human” love, acceptance, and worth.

## Living “A” Life Results In Ongoing Fleshly Behaviors

Another consequence of living “A” life is that you will live from your fleshly behaviors instead of Christ-likeness. Why? Since living “A” life will never give you victory or freedom over your flesh, then you will stay locked into your fleshly behaviors. If you are not familiar with the flesh or fleshly behaviors let’s, take a quick look at the meaning of both. Here is how flesh is defined.

***The FLESH is an ATTITUDE within us that says, “I DON’T need God to live life or I can live life INDEPENDENT of God.”***

Living out of the flesh produces fleshly behaviors. Let’s look at a definition of fleshly behaviors.

***Fleshly behaviors are self-centered, sinful ATTITUDES and ACTIONS that result from living from the FLESH.***

Below are some examples of fleshly behaviors that flow out of our flesh:

Frustrated	Angry	Controlling
Rejecting	Unloving	Critical
Guilting	Shaming	Manipulative
Unforgiving	Condescending	Judging
Uncaring	Insensitive	Resentful
Jealous	People-pleasing	Self-righteous
Selfish	Abusive	Blaming
Envious	Deceitful	Bitter
Condemning	Resisting	Demanding
Coping	Self-protective	Self-absorbed

**Question:** Which of these fleshly behaviors do you struggle with? How are they negatively impacting your personal life, marriage, parenting, friendships and co-workers?

## The Line and Christ-Likeness and Fleshly Behaviors

Now we know that we have two choices when it comes to living the Christian life. Either we live above the line and live out of our Christ-likeness or stay in bondage to our fleshly behaviors below the line as illustrated below.

Unconditional Love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Forgiveness
Understanding	Peace	Security	Kindness
Discernment	Wisdom	Humility	Compassion
Christ-confidence	Adequacy	Boldness	Gentleness
Righteousness	Rest	Courage	Selflessness
Christ-control	Hope	Power	Goodness
Other's Focused	Joy	Sacrificial	Faithfulness

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### THE Life = CHRIST-LIKENESS

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### A Life = FLESHLY BEHAVIORS

Anxious, angry, unworthy, self-righteous, impatient, demanding, unforgiving, unloving, defensive, inadequate, critical, judgmental, ashamed, controlling, arrogant, manipulative, guilty, rejecting, insecure, selfish, self-protective, self-absorbed,

Paul reveals in Romans 8:6 the choice and the consequences of our choices.

*“The mind set on the **flesh** is **death** and the mind set on the **Spirit** is **life** and peace.”*

Therefore, we have a choice to live in the “death” that results from living from our fleshly behaviors or choose to live from Christ as our Source and experience Life = Christ-likeness.

Now that we clearly know the choice, where do you want to live? Above or below the line?

## CHAPTER THREE

### How Do We Live Above The Line?

*“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who **ABIDES** in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” John 15:5*

#### Introduction

John 15:5 is one of the most profound verses in the Bible because it is the “how to” verse for living above the line. Wouldn’t Jesus give us the perfect example of how to live THE Christian life? Therefore, let’s contrast what we may have been taught about living the Christian life versus the truth.

#### Working? Or Abiding?

##### WORKING

As I shared earlier, I was taught that to produce the Christian life, it was up to me with God’s help to do it. I was also taught that I was to learn the Bible and go out in my own strength and willpower and self-discipline and DO what it says. The problem is that I continually failed and for 30 years never experienced any transformation.

Why? Isn’t it true that when we look at our job, our hobbies, etc. that we learn how to do them and then do them. The problem is that “learn and do” make work in everything else we do but it does not work to produce and experience THE Christian life.

##### ABIDING

Let’s look at the first part of John 15:5 again.

*“I AM the VINE, you are the branches; he who **ABIDES** in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit....” John 15:5a*

Jesus is saying that just as the physical branch is designed to be **totally dependent** upon the physical vine for life, you, as a “spiritual” branch, are designed to live **totally dependent** upon Christ, the spiritual Vine of your life. The word “abide” is another word for “dependence.” In addition to dependence, other words for “abide” are:

- Remain
- Rely on
- Draw from
- Live from
- Cooperate with

Think about this question. Doesn't it make sense that since Christ is our Source, our part is to **depend** on Him to be our Source? That is why Jesus uses the perfect example of the branch being totally dependent on the vine for life. Therefore, our part in God's transformation process is this:

***To DEPEND ON, RELY ON and DRAW FROM  
God as our SOURCE to transform us  
into Christ-likeness.***

How do we know abiding/dependence is God's design for man. To answer this question, let's go back to the Garden of Eden before the Fall of man. Adam and Eve were designed to live in total dependence on God. As a result, He met every physical, emotional and spiritual need. They were totally dependent on God as their Source.

The question we need to know the answer to is this: Did God's design for man change after the Fall? The answer is “no.” God's design for you and me after the Fall is no different. We, too, are designed to live in total dependence on God.

However, someone has to do the “work” to move us to live above the line and be transformed into Christ-likeness. God is the Source to do the work. However, we have a work to do as well.

***Our WORK is to live in DEPENDENCE on God to accomplish the work of transformation in our lives.***

Look at how Paul confirms this in Colossians 1:29

***“That’s why I work and struggle so hard, DEPENDING on Christ’s mighty power that works within me.”***

Paul is telling us that dependence on God takes work. Working means we have to intentionally seek the Lord in dependence. This is not a “self-effort” working. Rather, it is a working that comes from the Holy Spirit who gives us the willingness to depend on Him. What comes naturally is to live independent of God in our flesh. What takes “work” is to intentionally seek to live in dependence on God through His power to accomplish the work (i.e. spiritual transformation).

Going back to John 15:5 you may have been falsely taught that the word “bears” means “produce.” However, the word “bears” simply means “to carry.” In other words, the branch simply carries the fruit rather than produce it. Jesus, as the Vine is the Source for producing the fruit while you and I as branches are the vessel through which the fruit is produced in us and through us.

Andrew Murray sums up abiding this way.

***“Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as the condition for experiencing spiritual transformation, but rather a consenting to let Him do all for us, in us, and through us. It is a work He does for us as the fruit and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust, and to wait for what He has promised to perform.”***

Andrew Murray - Abiding in Christ (p. 25). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

[**Note:** The last part of John 15:5 says, “apart from Me you can do nothing.” What this means is that apart from abiding/depending on Christ, you will never be able to be transformed.]

## **Three Key Truths Concerning Abiding**

### **1. Abiding Requires FAITH**

*“Without **faith** it is impossible to please God.” Hebrews 11:6*

Abiding can only work if we do it by faith. Here is a definition of faith.

***Faith is a moment-by-moment **DEPENDENCE** on God as your Source to grow spiritually.***

Faith is simply coming to God with an attitude of total dependence and willingness for Him to transform your life.

### **2. Abiding Is PROACTIVE Which Means We Engage God and Take STEPS of Faith**

*“For we **walk by faith**, not by sight.”  
2 Corinthians 5:7*

Abiding is proactive in that we must be intentional and determined to seek God to transform our lives. We will look at several examples of what it looks like to engage God later in this study.

### **3. Abiding Releases The POWER of the Holy Spirit To Transform Our Lives**

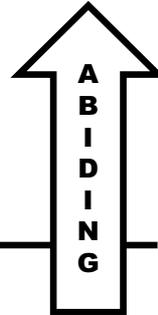
The moment you take a step of faith, God releases the full force of His power in you to transform you. What kind of power are we talking about? Ephesians 1:19, 20 gives us the answer.

*“I pray that you will begin to understand the **incredible greatness of His power** for us who believe him. This is the **same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead.....”***

This is the same power that created the heavens and is holding the universe together. As we abide through engaging God, His power will transform us into Christ-likeness. This is how we move from living below the line to living above the line as illustrated below.

**Abiding Is How We Live Above The Line**

Unconditional Love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Forgiveness
Understanding	Peace	Security	Kindness
Discernment	Wisdom	Humility	Compassion
Christ-confidence	Adequacy	Boldness	Gentleness
Righteousness	Rest	Courage	Selflessness
Christ-control	Hope	Power	Goodness
Other's Focused	Joy	Sacrificial	Faithfulness



**Christ-Likeness**

**Fleshly Behaviors**

**Anxious, angry, unworthy, self-righteous, impatient, demanding, unforgiving, unloving, defensive, inadequate, critical, judgmental, ashamed, controlling, arrogant, manipulative, guilty, rejecting, selfish**

To sum up, our desire is to be transformed but we cannot produce the transformation that God promises. Only as we abide in Christ can this take place. Why?

**Abiding results in *RELEASING* the power of the Holy Spirit in us to *TRANSFORM* our lives to live from *CHRIST-LIKENESS***

Now that we know that abiding/dependence/faith moves us to live above the line let's look at some examples of abiding. We will start with what abiding looks like in two of our main spiritual practices.

### **Abiding and Spiritual Practices**

Let's look at some examples of how abiding applies to such spiritual practices as abiding in God's word and prayer.

#### **Abiding In God's Word**

*“Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If **you abide in my word (personal, spiritual understanding), you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”** John 8:31-32*

Jesus is telling us that abiding (remain, draw from and live from) in His word is essential for being a disciple and growing up spiritually with the result being we will be set free. This may not be new to you but practically speaking what does it mean to abide in God's word.

First, abiding in God's word is **not** engaging our intellect. In other words, spending time in God's word is not like studying for a course or for purely gaining knowledge. When it comes to spiritual transformation, abiding in God's word means engaging the Holy Spirit through meditation.

#### **Meditation**

*“My eyes anticipate the nighttime hours, so that **I can meditate on your word.**” Psalm 119:148.*

If you are not aware, meditation is a devotional practice of engaging the Holy Spirit to gain spiritual understanding of His word. In addition, we meditate to know God more deeply, love Him more, experience closer communion with Him, and experience His divine promises. Meditation is a crucial part of the transformation process and primarily results in two things:

- **Revelation**
- **Application**

## **Revelation**

Revelation simply means that God supernaturally takes His truth and makes it personal to you and to your life situations. “Supernaturally” is the means God uses to give us personal revelation for which there is no man-made explanation. Revelation takes you from intellectual understanding to supernatural, spiritual understanding of God’s truth. For example, have you ever been reading God’s word and something jumps off the page that impacts you personally? If so, that would be an example of revelation.

Here is an example of abiding in God’s word/engaging the Holy Spirit for revelation: “Holy Spirit, I am seeking You to reveal to me personally what this verse means.”

If the Spirit chooses, He will insert personal, spiritual thoughts and understanding into your mind. Remember, that abiding in God’s word must be developed over time and become a “holy” habit. You will find as you cultivate this habit, you will more clearly hear the Spirit’s voice.

I am not saying there is anything wrong with using Bible dictionaries, concordances, study guides, etc. as you spend time in God’s word. However, if you do, I would encourage you not to try to use them to understand God’s word intellectually. Rather, use them as a means for seeking the Holy Spirit to give you spiritual understanding.

The reason revelation is so crucial to transformation is that it leads to personal application.

**Engaging God For Revelation:** “Lord, I pray that as I read your word by faith, I am trusting You to make personal revelation of what I am reading.”

## **Application**

Application takes revelation one step further. Not only does revelation give us spiritual insight, it leads to spiritual application. Application is taking spiritual revelation from the Spirit and choosing through God’s power to use in your life with the ultimate goal being transformation or life change. Why? Because God’s word is meant not merely to inform you but it is meant to renew your mind and transform you according to Romans 12:2:

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

**Engaging God For Application:** “Holy Spirit, I am asking You to not only reveal Your truth but renew my mind with it and show me how it applies to myself, my marriage, my family, my job or my circumstances.”

Let’s look at a specific example to better understand this truth. God’s word in 1 Corinthians 2:16 says that we have the mind of Christ which means we have access to God’s wisdom, understanding and discernment. Let’s assume you are trying to make a major decision. Engaging God might look like this. “Lord, I am seeking Your wisdom and discernment to show me the right decision to make.”

## Abiding In Prayer

Prayer can primarily be an exercise where we petition God for our personal needs. This is a crucial part of prayer because it is an act of dependence on God not you or someone else to meet your needs.

However, there is another key component of abiding prayer and that is to focus on deepening one's relationship with God through loving communion. This focus of abiding prayer encourages us to listen to God more deeply, rather than simply talking to him in a one-way conversation.

- **Spiritual listening**
- **Stillness**

## Spiritual Listening

***“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” John 10:27***

Whether it is being in God's word or in prayer, how will we gain understanding, direction, discernment, or God's will unless we can hear from God? The truth is that we can't. This is Jesus says in Revelation 3:20

***“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. **If anyone hears my voice and opens the door (to our hearts), I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”*****

We often use this verse for salvation but have you ever thought this refers to Jesus knocking on the door of your heart, desiring to speak to you. This verse means Jesus is inviting us to not only hear His voice but allow Him to enter into our hearts transform us.

Some Christians have heard audible voices from God but I never have. His voice comes in the way of thoughts. The Holy

Spirit will insert thoughts into my mind as the primary way of speaking to me. Let me share with you the most effective way I have found to hear the Spirit's voice.

**Engaging God To Hear His Voice:** "Holy Spirit, I am seeking You to give me Your ears to hear your voice through my thoughts."

### **Stillness**

*"He leads me beside still waters and restores my soul."*

*Psalm 23:2*

*"Be still and know that I am God...."*

*Psalm 46:10*

Hearing the Holy Spirit is a spiritual habit that requires time spent with the Lord. One of the key ways I have learned to listen to the Spirit is to sit in stillness before the Lord. When you look at Psalm 46:10, it is saying that one of the ways to know and hear from God is being still. This is the hardest spiritual habit to live out of but the most rewarding if you do it.

Being still before God simply means sitting in His presence. Not praying, nor reading the Bible or a Christian book. It is simply sitting in His presence and being with Him. This seems like a waste of time because you are not doing anything. However, if you can develop this spiritual habit, you will find yourself entering into a spiritual rest you never thought possible.

I would suggest starting with just a few minutes in stillness. Once you get still you will experience your mind going in all kinds of directions. You may get focused on what you have to do that day or something that is troubling you. The temptation is to try and control your thoughts but don't do this because it will only lead to frustration. The key is to spend this time in stillness regardless of where your mind wanders. Over time, your mind will settle down and you will begin to receive and "hear" the

Holy Spirit through the thoughts He will be inserting in your mind.

**Engaging God in Stillness:** “Lord, I am sitting here before You and my mind keeps racing. I am praying you calm my mind and move me into a rest where I can receive what You desire to share.”

### **Abiding Throughout The Day**

As the physical branch stays attached (abiding continuously) so we can abide with the Lord throughout the day. Since Christ lives in us (Galatians 2:20) then we can interact with Him throughout the day. This does not mean we have to focus on Him all the time because we can't. However, I do ask the Lord throughout the day such things as this:

- Keep bringing Himself to my mind
- Keep me alert to ministry opportunities
- Keep me from going to the flesh
- Reveal to me when I sin

Think about this.

***ETERNALLY more than you want to spend time with the Lord throughout the day, He wants to spend EVERY waking moment with you.***

Now that we have seen application of abiding to being in God's word, prayer and throughout the day, in the next chapter we will learn what it means to practically live above the line.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Practical Application To Live Above The Line

#### Introduction

In this chapter, I want us to look at some practical application of how we are transformed to live above the line from Christ-likeness. Let's look at the line illustration with our Christ-likeness above the line versus our fleshly behaviors below the line.

Unconditional Love	Victory	Worth	Acceptance
Freedom	Patience	Strength	Forgiveness
Understanding	Peace	Security	Kindness
Discernment	Wisdom	Humility	Compassion
Christ-confidence	Adequacy	Boldness	Gentleness
Righteousness	Rest	Courage	Selflessness
Christ-control	Hope	Power	Goodness
Other's Focused	Joy	Sacrificial	Faithfulness

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#### THE Life = CHRIST-LIKENESS

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#### A Life = FLESHLY BEHAVIORS

*Anxious, angry, unworthy, self-righteous, impatient, demanding, unforgiving, unloving, defensive, inadequate, critical, judgmental, ashamed, controlling, arrogant, manipulative, guilty, rejecting, insecure, selfish, self-protective, self-absorbed,*

Take a moment and choose which of these Christ-like characteristics you would most like to experience. I am going to take a few of these characteristics and give examples of what it looks like to abide in order to be transformed to experience that characteristic. Before I do, let's look at two key truths concerning our fleshly behaviors.

# You Have Two Choices Concerning Your Fleshly Behavior

When it comes to our fleshly behaviors, we can choose either to **hold onto** and stay below the line or **entrust** that fleshly behavior to God by faith and move above the line. Let's look at the difference between the two.

## Holding Onto Our Fleshly Behaviors

What if we hold onto a fleshly behavior? It will be like grabbing a piece of burning charcoal and not letting go. You will inevitably get third degree burns by not letting go. Spiritually speaking, if you hold onto a fleshly behavior, it negatively impacts you and it will be toxic to everyone around you.

## Entrusting Our Fleshly Behaviors

The other choice is to entrust. Let's look at the definition of "entrust."

### ***"ENTRUST"***

***GIVING OVER your fleshly behavior to God for Him to TRANSFORM your fleshly behavior into Christ-likeness***

Instead of holding onto our fleshly behaviors, we are to give it over to God for Him to transform us so that we no longer live from that behavior. In other words, God will replace our fleshly behavior with Christ-like attitudes. Let's look at a few examples to see how this works.

## Experiencing Christ-Like FREEDOM

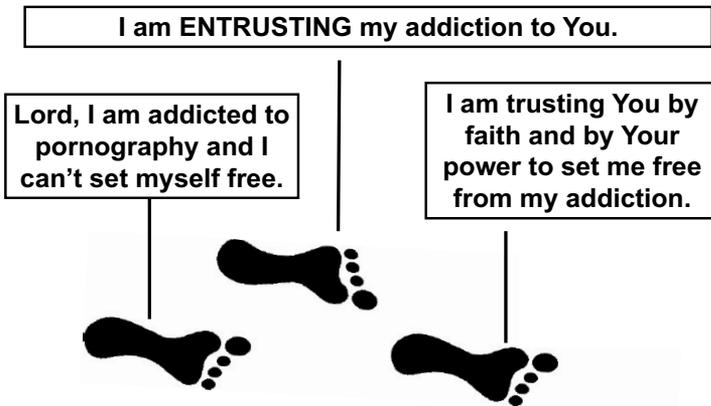
*"and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you **free**." John 8:32*

Where does knowing, believing and walking in God's truth take us. According to the last part of John 8:32 it takes us to freedom. What kind of freedom? There are two kinds of freedom. Being free FROM something in order to be free TO do something. Here are some examples of what it means to be free FROM something.

- Freedom from fleshly behaviors
- Freedom from sin strongholds
- Freedom from our self as the source.

Here is an example of what abiding looks like to experience freedom **from** a sin stronghold through Christ.

**Example:** – Let's assume you are addicted to pornography. The first thing you need to recognize is that you cannot set yourself free. Therefore, entrust your addiction to God and seek Him to set you free FROM pornography.

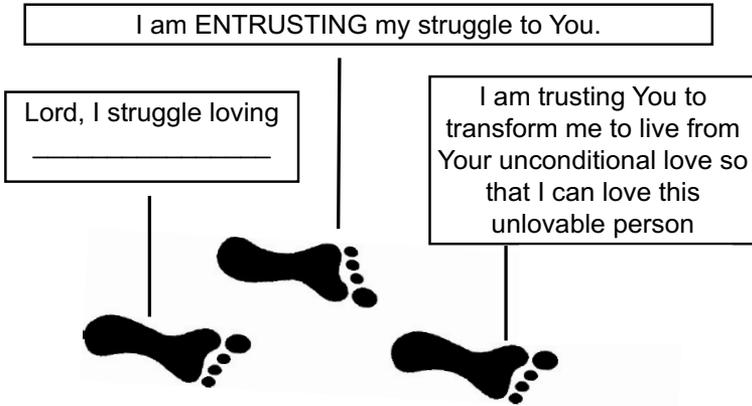


Let's look at an example of what abiding looks like to experience freedom **TO** love an unlovable person.

**Example:** You struggle loving someone for whatever reason.

**The Truth:** You contain all of Christ's unconditional love as part of your Christ-likeness which means you can seek Christ by faith

to BE your unconditional love in order to transform you to love your unlovable person. Here are some examples of steps of faith.



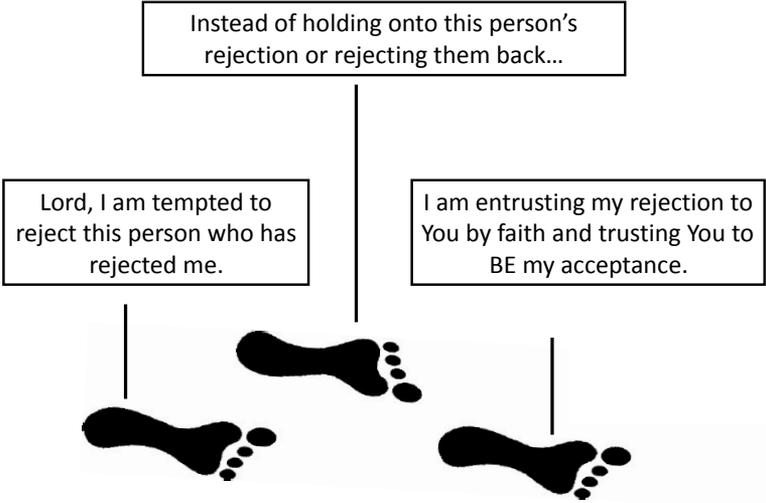
### Experiencing Christ-Like ACCEPTANCE

**Example:** Let's assume you struggle with taking ownership of other people's rejection.

**Consequences of Holding Onto To Fleshly Behaviors:** If we take ownership of someone's rejection towards us it can result in fleshly behaviors such as rejecting back, withdrawing, or getting angry.

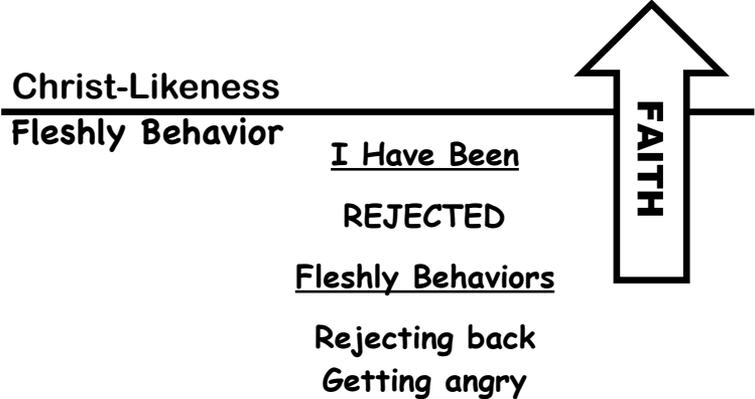
**The Truth:** You are totally accepted in Christ. As you seek the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and persuade you that you are accepted and acceptable then you no longer have to take ownership of someone's rejection.

Let's look at some steps of faith and see the how we entrust versus hold onto rejection.



In this example, we are seeking Christ to exchange our rejection for His acceptance. Applying this to the line illustration we can stay locked into our rejection below the line or we can take steps of faith and over time live above the line from Christ-like acceptance and no longer live in rejection.

**Christ-Like  
ACCEPTANCE**



**Engaging God:** Do you tend to take ownership of someone else’s rejection towards you? If so, begin taking steps of faith to entrust your rejection to God and trust Jesus to BE your acceptance.

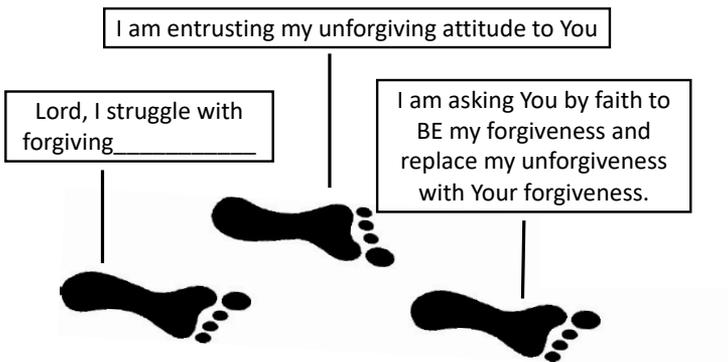
## **Experiencing Christ-Like FORGIVENESS**

**Example:** Assume you were wounded by someone and you struggle with forgiving them.

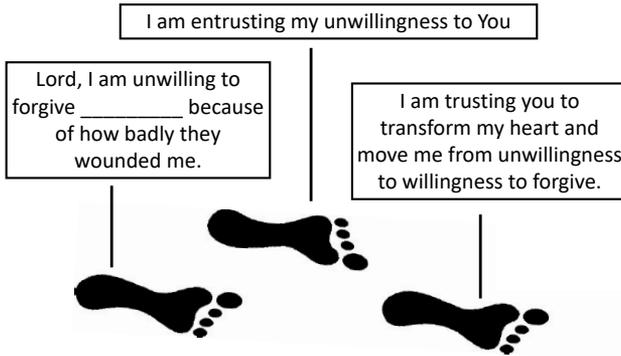
**Consequences and Choices:** If you hold onto your unforgiveness below the line, it can produce ongoing anger, bitterness, or deeper unforgiveness.

**The Truth:** Unforgiveness results when we take ownership of someone else’s offense. However, we have no excuse for not forgiving because we contain all of Christ’s **forgiveness** and He forgave us of all our past, present, and future sins.

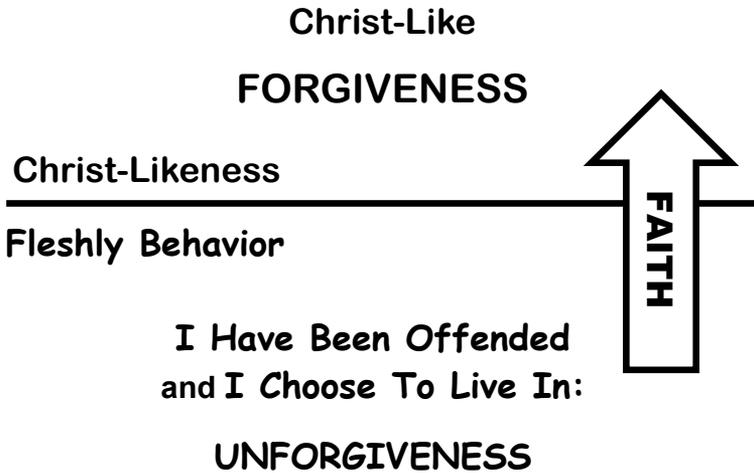
What are some steps of faith that we can take for the Holy Spirit to transform our hearts and move us from unforgiveness to forgiveness.



**Important Thought:** What if you are **not** willing to forgive that person. In order to have that willingness, seek the Spirit to give you the willingness to forgive. Here is an example of steps of faith.



Let's look at the line analogy below concerning forgiveness.



**Engaging God:** Who do you struggle with forgiving? Will you seek the Lord to forgive that person or seek Him to give you the willingness to forgive? Begin taking steps of faith.

**Experiencing Christ-Like CONTROL**

**Example:** You just found out that you have lost your job, and you start feeling out of control.

**The Truth:** One of the major struggles we face as humans is the need to be in control. Often this is because we feel if we are in control, we will feel secure. But our thinking we are in control is an illusion because the truth is there is only One who is actually in control. Concerning this example, God provided the job you just lost. Because He is in control and is for you (Romans 8:31), He will provide your next job.

**Consequences and Choices:** If you choose to try to be in control concerning your job loss, you may start feeling anxious, fearful, or frustrated because you don't know where your next job is coming from or how you will meet your financial obligations. However, if you choose to walk in Christ's **control**, then you can be at peace knowing the Lord will provide.

**Step of Faith:** "Lord, I just lost my job. I feel out of control. I am entrusting those feelings to You and trusting You to BE my **control** because You are in control. I can rest in You because you brought me my last job and You will provide me the next one."

## **Summary**

I hope this lesson has shown how practically we can live and experience Christ-likeness as we abide in Him.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Final Truths About Living Above The Line

### Key Truths About Living Above The Line

#### 1. Learning to live above the line is a PROCESS.

When it comes to any part of God transforming our lives, I have discovered from those I have ministered to that they don't like the word "process." Why? When we seek God for transformation, we want it, and we want it now. Would you agree? Even though we know that God can transform us instantly, transformation for the most part will be a process.

#### 2. The Process Takes Us From FAITH To EXPERIENCE

The process begins as we take steps of faith. Early on we may not experience Christ-like forgiveness for example. However, as we take steps of faith, over time we will begin to experience forgiveness for that person.



***Moving From Faith To Experience***

### 3. God's transforming process is SUPERNATURAL.

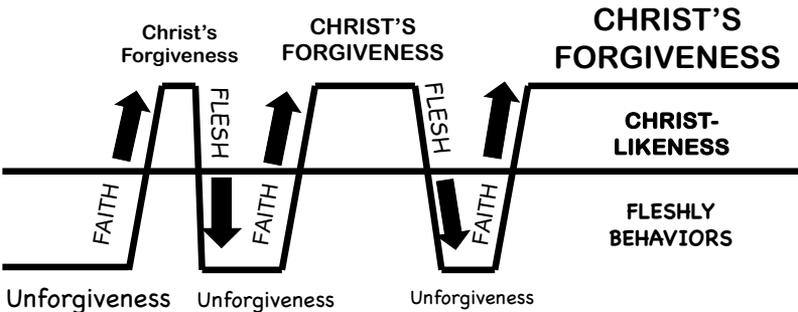
A key truth in understanding God's transforming process is to grasp the truth that it is always a supernatural process. I define supernatural this way:

***A work that God accomplishes IN us as we walk by faith for which there is NO natural or man-made explanation.***

Who can explain supernatural? It is not explainable nor understandable. Even though I didn't know what or how God was transforming me, I continued walking by faith until He supernaturally did so.

### 4. Along The Way We Will Fall BELOW The Line

As you seek the Holy Spirit to transform your life, you take steps of faith to move take you above the line but because early on the **strength** of your fleshly behavior will cause you to give into the flesh and **fall below** the line. We can see what this looks like in being transformed to live from Christ's forgiveness.



The key to remember is that with each step of faith transformation is taking place. As you see from this diagram, over time you find yourself experiencing more Christ-like forgiveness which leads to you spending less time below the line in unforgiveness. The truth is that you will fail and fall below the line many times. When you do, repent of your flesh and take

another step of faith because over time you will experience transformation.

## **What Is The Ultimate Objective of Abiding?**

We have learned so far that through abiding we can live above the line and be transformed to live from Christ-likeness. However, that is not the ultimate objective of THE Christian life.

I believe the ultimate result of abiding is a deep, personal relationship with God because

***God created you out of LOVE in order to LOVE  
and be LOVED by Him.***

Stop and think about this for a moment. This amazing, majestic, all-powerful God who does not need us, created us so that not only can He love us but we will love Him. He pursues us not only for Him to love us but for us to love Him with that same love. This is why Jesus said the greatest commandment is this:

***“...love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Matthew 22:37***

God wants more than a one-way relationship. His greatest desire is for you to love Him. Think of a lovesick man who is pursuing the woman he so loves and wants to marry. At some point, his desire is for her to stop running from him and turn around and fall into his arms. What a beautiful analogy of God’s pursuit of man. God’s greatest desire is for us to come to the place David did in Psalm 73:25

***“Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you  
more than anything on earth.”***

Therefore, as we abide in Christ, He is producing His love in and through us for Him. Over time, our love for God will deepen and we will experience the intimate relationship we were created for. Let me end this section with this thought.

***When you finally SEE and UNDERSTAND the depth of God's love for you, your GREATEST desire for the rest of your life will be to love HIM.***

### **My Journey Into Christ-Likeness**

As, I began the journey of abiding in Christ to live THE life above the line, God began transforming my life.

As a result of engaging God by faith to live in me, I am being set free from my sin strongholds of inadequacy, fear, anger, rejection, and unworthiness. Christ has replaced these strongholds with His adequacy, His courage, His love, His acceptance, and His worth.

To give you a personal example. Because of my father's verbal, emotional, and physical abuse, I lived in anger, unforgiveness and bitterness towards my dad for 48 years. As I began to seek the Holy Spirit to replace my unforgiveness with Christ-like forgiveness, over time, the Lord transformed me in such a way that I was able to forgive my dad for his abuse and rejection.

In addition, the Lord replaced my anger and hatred with His love with the result that even though my dad is with the Lord, I am experiencing Christ's unconditional love for him. It truly was a miracle and as a result of this transformation and many other examples, I am persuaded of what Paul says in Ephesians 3:20:

***"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us."***

## Conclusion

I hope this booklet has encouraged you and has given you hope that your life can be transformed. Because of that, let's look one more time at the biblical definition of "transformed":

***A change of the form or nature of a person  
into a COMPLETELY different person  
by SUPERNATURAL means.***

As we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into Christ-likeness, we will become completely different people. What an amazing promise that is. If you choose to depend on Christ to live His life in you above the line, He will transform you into Christ-likeness. That is why I pray you choose to live above the line.

## Where Do I Go From Here?

At our website listed below, we encourage you to check out our four-part discipleship series called ***Growing Up – Growing Out – Growing Deep*** designed to teach Christians how to fulfill their purpose and calling. The first book in the series is called ***Growing to Become Like Christ***.

Book One covers the following topics:



- What it means to grow up spiritually to become like Christ.
- The difference between living “A” Christian life versus living “THE” Christian life.
- What it looks like practically to grow to become like Christ.
- What are some of the hindrances to spiritual growth and how we overcome them.
- How becoming like Christ transforms every area of our lives.

## CILM DISCIPLESHIP MATERIALS

CILM has this series and many other studies, booklets and videos at our website listed below. To purchase ready-to-use copies from **Amazon or download for free** and do your own printing, copying and binding, please go to the **Discipleship** tab of our website. We hope you will take advantage of these materials.

***Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM)***

**Website: [www.christislifeministries.com](http://www.christislifeministries.com)**

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(2025-08-08)

# Are You Living Above The Line?

Life is made up of choices and we have all lived long enough to know the consequences of making the wrong choices. However, when it comes to our spiritual walk, what if we don't even know the right choice to make? As a Christian, I didn't know the right choice for 30 years with the result that nothing changed and things got worse. When I discovered and started living from the right choice, I began experiencing a life of ongoing victory, freedom and spiritual transformation. I am writing this booklet because if you are making the wrong choice like I was, I want to share with you a life-transforming truth that will change your spiritual destiny forever.

These are some of the truths I will be sharing:

- The choice: Living “A” Christian life or “THE” Christian life.
- Which life leads to victory, freedom and transformation and which one doesn't?
- How can living “THE” Christian life lead to being transformed to become like Christ?
- How would becoming like Christ change every area of your life?
- How are we practically transformed into Christ-likeness?

*“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”*

2 Corinthians 3:18



Bill Loveless is the founder of Christ Is Life Ministries (CILM), a non-profit, non-denominational discipleship ministry. CILM's focus is teaching Christians that Christ is their only source for living the Christian life, what it looks like to be transformed into Christ-likeness, and how to be drawn into a deep relationship with Him. Bill finished his earthly journey in 2024 and is now with the Lord he loves.

For further information and to see other discipleship materials being offered, please go to our website: [www.christislifeministries.com](http://www.christislifeministries.com)

