

SHARING LIFE

"IN CHRIST"



Bill Loveless
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INTRODUCTION

I wrote this study because I feel it is not only important to know, believe and walk in Christ as Life but to be able to share the basic Christ-life truths one-on-one, as well as to teach or facilitate these truths through a book of the Bible and a Christian book or study. This is especially important if you currently teach or facilitate small group studies. So, I pray this book will help you along this path.

CHAPTER ONE

Living The Christian Life “In Self” Versus “In Christ”

Introduction

In this first chapter, I want to share with you how to share Christ is Life with others. The focus will be on living the Christian life “in self” versus “in Christ.” I am writing this chapter as if you are learning these truths for the first time. If you are not familiar with what it means for Christ to be your life, I hope this chapter will give you new revelation and understanding of this very key truth.

After living the Christian life for 53 years, I have come to one inescapable conclusion:

***Either we are living the Christian life
“IN SELF” or “IN CHRIST.”***

When we talk about living the Christian life, the key word is “source.” This word has many connotations: produce, provide, supply and initiate. When it comes to living the Christian life, you only have two choices to be your source: you or Christ. It is based on this truth that we begin by defining “in self” and “in Christ.” Let’s start with “in self.”

Living The Christian Life “IN SELF”

I define “in self” this way:

***It is up to YOU as the SOURCE using your intellect, IQ,
ability, self-discipline and Biblical knowledge with
GOD’S HELP to PRODUCE the Christian life.***

Let me give some examples to explain the definition.

It is up to you with God's help to:

- Take God's word and do what it says.
- Keep God's commands.
- Produce spiritual victory and freedom.
- Set yourself free from your sinful behaviors.
- Produce victory over your strongholds.
- Transform yourself.

Let me ask you two questions: If you have been trying to accomplish these things, how is that working out? Have you been successful in accomplishing any of these things? Let me share with you my journey living from an "in self" Christian life.

My 30 Year Journey of Living An "In Self" Christian Life

I became a Christian at age 18, but I did not get serious about my Christian walk until I was 22. At that point, I asked another Christian who was part of a ministry that disciplined college students, "Tell me what to **do** to live the Christian life?" The reason I asked the question is that up to that point everything I did in life was something I learned and then went out and accomplished. I call this the "learn and do" mentality.

Therefore, when it came to living the Christian life, I felt that I just needed someone to tell me what to do, I would learn how to do it, and then I would do it. Doesn't this sound logical to you?

Guess what they told me to do? Everything listed on the previous page. I was told that if I could accomplish these things with God's help, then I would be a "successful" Christian and I would experience the abundant life. So I started down the list trying to accomplish everything on it.

I call it my thirty years of "trying" because I failed at consistently accomplishing anything on that list. However, being a strong-willed Christian, I kept trying for the next 30 years.

During that time, I asked God many times to help but I never really felt He was helping.

By the time I was 18, I had great internal struggles with inadequacy, fear, anger, rejection, and unworthiness. In addition, I was physically, verbally, and emotionally abused by my father which created great internal woundedness. As I read God's promises of victory, freedom, healing of woundedness and transformation, I wanted to experience those promises in my life. I thought that if I could successfully complete the list then I would experience these promises.

The problem is that the more I tried, the more exhausted I became. Not only that but all my trying never resulted in the freedom, victory, healing, and transformation that God promises. As hard as I tried, I was never able to set myself free from the feelings and beliefs of fear, inadequacy, rejection, and unworthiness. In fact, all of these feelings got worse.

Due to the woundedness from my dad, I harbored anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness towards him. I knew the truth was that I was supposed to forgive him but I couldn't do it. In fact, my feelings toward my dad got worse. I also struggled over those years with fleshly behaviors such as anger, being controlling, being critical, and judgmental.

In addition, I became very self-righteous because I had accumulated a lot of Bible knowledge and people around me needed to know how much I understood about the Bible. At one point, my sister said that I was the most self-righteous person she ever knew. The sad part is that she was right.

The last ten years of my 30-year journey of living an "in self" life, I got married. I mistakenly thought that marriage would solve many of my problems. It only created more. When my wife would not meet my needs and expectations, my anger and controlling would get out of control. We would go to Christian marriage conferences that told us what we had to do to have a Christ-centered marriage but none of the marriage "to do" lists

made any difference. As a result, my wife and I after ten years started emotionally separating.

As a Christian, one of my desires was to be a godly business owner. I failed at this as well because I felt so inadequate. As a result, I believed it was up to my employees to always perform well enough to make me look good. If I thought they were failing me in any way, they would get the full force of my anger.

All this time, I was faithfully going to church, reading my Bible, praying, and doing what I was told to do to be a successful Christian. However, the more I tried living an “in self” Christian life, the more I failed. You can imagine that failing year after year, only created a greater frustration with my Christian walk because nothing seemed to change and my fleshly attitudes only got worse.

On top of the fact that I was not experiencing any change, I started condemning myself when I failed to do what the Bible told me to do. I kept thinking to myself that I must be doing something wrong or I must not be trying hard enough. In addition, I felt that God had let me down because after all of my hard work for Him, He was not coming through with the victory and freedom He promises.

Truth be told, towards the end of my thirty-year journey I began giving up on living the Christian life. I finally concluded that abundant life must come after death because I couldn't attain it now no matter how hard I tried. Instead of getting closer to the abundant life after all those years, I was becoming depressed and at one point I had thoughts of suicide.

Why weren't all my efforts being rewarded by God? What was I doing wrong? Was there some key truth that I was missing in my understanding of the Christian life? The answer is “Yes.”

John 8:32 says:

“You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.”

Have you thought about the converse of that verse? If we don't know the truth then we will be in bondage to the lie. The lie for me concerning living the "in self" Christian life was this:

You can SUCCESSFULLY live the Christian life by You being the source with God's help.

Living an "in self" life certainly was not successful for me. In fact, after 30 years of living it, this is what I was experiencing.

- More frustration
- More failure
- More defeat
- More bondage
- More disillusionment
- More inner turmoil
- More of the same and worse.

Can you identify? Are any of these things true of you? If so, is it possible that this is not the life that God intends for us to live?

Living The Christian Life "IN CHRIST"

Living the Christian life "in Christ" is defined this way:

It is up to GOD as the SOURCE to PRODUCE the Christian life in you.

To help you better understand life "in Christ," I will break this definition down into three parts:

- **What is THE Christian life?**
- **What does it mean for Christ to be THE Christian life?**
- **What will THE Christian life that is being produced in you look like?**

1. What Is THE Christian Life?

If someone were to come to you and ask you, “What is the Christian life?” what would you tell them? Before I knew better, I would have answered that question by saying, “The Christian life is about reading my Bible, praying, going to church, serving in the church, being involved in a small group study and doing the best I can for God.” This was my spiritual checklist for 30 years. For all that time I thought my trying to continually “work” this checklist was the Christian life.

However, in October of 1998 my definition completely changed. A man by the name of Ian Thomas came to speak at our home church and shared these words:

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

I don’t know how these words strike you but at that moment, the Spirit revealed to me that I was trying to live THE life that only one Person can live. That person is Jesus Christ.

a. What Does Christ As THE Life Mean?

After I heard Ian Thomas speak those words, I dove deeper into the meaning of THE life. I focused on these two verses where Jesus says:

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

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

Think about these verses for a minute. What is Jesus saying? It is clear 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 they only meant He was the source for my **eternal** life when I trusted in Him for salvation. But as I spent time with these verses, the Holy Spirit revealed to me that what Jesus is saying is this:

***“THE” Christian Life is a PERSON.
It is Christ HIMSELF!***

This revelation created a radical shift in my thinking when I realized the Christian life was NOT a checklist of what I was supposed to accomplish for God. Rather, the Christian life is a Person. If you have believed that the Christian life is what we do for God, doesn't it change how you think about the Christian life knowing it is a Person rather than a checklist you are trying to do through self-effort?

What does Paul have to say about Christ being THE Life?

b. What Paul Says About Living “THE” Christian Life

Paul confirms what Jesus said about being THE Life in Philippians 1:21 when he says:

*“For me, to live **IS CHRIST....**”*

Paul confirms that “THE” Christian life is a Person, which means it 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. He makes it even more personal in Colossians 3:4:

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

At this point you might be scratching your head and asking this question: “What does it mean for Christ to be THE Life and ‘your’ life?”

2. What It Means For Christ To Be THE LIFE

***Christ as THE Life and YOUR Life means that
He is the SOURCE for living life.***

We see this in 1 Corinthians 1:30:

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

Paul is telling us that Christ is our Source for life. When we look at this truth in light of how I defined the word “source” at the beginning of this chapter, Jesus as our Source is our:

- Initiator (of THE Life)
- Supplier (of THE Life)
- Provider (of THE Life)
- Producer (of THE Life)

Look at these four words in light of Philippians 1:6:

***“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began
a good work in you will carry it to completion
until the day of Christ Jesus.”***

God initiates His work in us at salvation and, as our Source, will bring it to completion because He is the provider, supplier and producer of THE Life.

Let’s look at two other verses that reveal that Christ 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.

Before we go on, let me address the issue of God's helping us live THE Christian life. The question was, "Will God help us live THE Christian life?" I asked God to help me for my first 30 years as a Christian but I never felt He really helped me. Why? Think about it for a moment in light of what you just read.

***If Christ is your SOURCE for living THE Christian life,
why would He HELP you be the source?***

To clarify, if you asked God to help you, weren't you really asking Him to help you be the source? However, since He is the Source, doesn't it make sense that He will not help you be the source?

I compare the question to having surgery. Imagine if you were having brain surgery performed on you and you came out of the anesthesia, took the scalpel from the surgeon and asked him to help you perform the surgery. I think we would agree that would not end well. In like manner, God is not going to help you be the source because He and He alone is the Source to produce THE Christian life in you. This brings us to the next question.

3. What Will THE Christian Life Look Like That Is Being Produced In You?

a. We Are Being Transformed Into Christ-Likeness

Look at 2 Corinthians 3:18:

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

Paul is telling us that THE Christian life being produced will result in our being transformed into Christ-likeness. Let's look at the definition of Christ-likeness.

b. The Definition of Christ-Likeness

***Christ-likeness results from living FROM the
SUPERNATURAL characteristics of Christ.***

c. Characteristics of Christ-Likeness

Here are some other examples of Christ-likeness, i.e., who Christ is in us:

Christ Is Your:

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth
Acceptance	Faith	Freedom
Patience	Strength	Peace
Forgiveness	Understanding	Security
Fearlessness	Wisdom	Discernment
Christ-confidence	Adequacy	Humility
Boldness	Righteousness	Selflessness
Rest	Compassion	Courage
Hope	Gentleness	Christ-control
Faithfulness	Power	Joy

The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, 23a 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....”***

The fruit of the Spirit is not something God gives us or that we try to produce, it is who Christ is in us (i.e., He is our love, joy, peace, etc.). We see a great 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.”

Paul declares that peace is not something we strive for. Peace is who Christ is in us. I was taught that it was up to me with God’s help to produce the fruit of the Spirit. I say kiddingly that a guy named Loveless should love more. So, I tried in and of myself to produce the love of Christ. For 30 years I never knew I already contained all the love of Christ and all the other fruits of the Spirit because that is who Jesus is in me.

d. Key Truths About Christ-Likeness

1. We contain ALL of these Christ-like characteristics.

The first key truth is since Christ is in you, how much of Christ’s love, acceptance, etc. do you contain? The answer is: 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.”

2. Christ Himself is our NEED-MEETER

Since we have the fullness of Christ in us, we also have all these Christ-like characteristics in us. As our Source, Christ is our need-meeter. This is why Paul says:

“And my God will meet all of your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ.”

When you look at the list on the previous page, is there anything on that list that you don’t need? The good news is we don’t have to try to meet our own needs because Christ Himself is our need-meeter.

3. Christ-like characteristics are SUPERNATURAL

I wish I could put human words to these characteristics of Christ, but they are supernatural which means they are God-produced and are beyond our understanding, as Paul exclaims in Philippians 4:7:

*“Then you will experience **God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand.** His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”*

4. You can EXPERIENCE Christ-likeness in the midst of negative circumstances or relationships.

Another important truth concerning Christ-likeness is if you live from Christ’s love, acceptance, security, rest, etc., no adversity, relationship or circumstance can rob you of these things. Paul gives us a personal example of this in Colossians 1:24:

“I am overflowing with JOY in the midst of all our suffering....”

In spite of Paul’s suffering (beatings, whippings, stoning, etc.), he was experiencing a supernatural, Christ-like joy that no suffering could rob him of. We know this is a supernatural joy because we would not be feeling a human joy in the midst of our suffering. I will share some other examples of living from Christ-likeness at the end of this chapter.

Now that we understand that “in Christ” means being transformed into Christ-likeness, the next question that needs to be answered is, “How do we live “in Christ?”

How Do We Live “In Christ”?

I believe the heart of the answer to this question is found in John 15:5:

*“**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 Him, the spiritual Vine, for life. The word “abide” means “**dependence**.” Other words for “abide” are:

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

Doesn't it make sense that if Christ is our Source, then 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.

So, God's design for you that allows Christ to live His life through you is:

***DEPEND ON, RELY ON and DRAW FROM
God as your Source.***

[Note: The word “bears” in John 15:5 does not mean “produce.” The word “bears” means “to carry.” The key point is the branch does not produce the fruit. The vine is the source for producing the fruit while the branch only manifests the fruit that the vine produces.]

Another word for dependence is **faith**. We see this in Galatians 2:20:

*“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, **but Christ lives in me**. The life I now live in the body, **I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

Why do we need to live by faith in Christ?

***As we walk by faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit Is
TRANSFORMING us into Christ-likeness.***

Another reason we are to depend on Christ is that He, through the Holy Spirit, is the initiator, provider and producer of Christ-likeness. (Philippians 1:6; 4:19). Our part is to depend on Him moment by moment to transform us into Christ-likeness.

Examples of What Our Lives Will Look Like As We Are Being Transformed Into Christ-Likeness

What will be the inward and outward results in our lives as we are being transformed into Christ-likeness? Here are some examples:

- You live from **Christ's unconditional love** rather than trying to seek love from others.
- You live from **Christ's acceptance** which means you no longer have to take ownership of someone else's rejection of you.
- You no longer have to live in fear because you are living from **Christ's courage**.
- You no longer have to try to be in control because you are living from **Christ's control**.
- You can live from **Christ's peace** when adverse circumstances occur (like receiving a life-threatening health diagnosis).
- You can live from **Christ-confidence** in spite of all the negativity and evil that is going on in the world.
- You can live from **Christ's forgiveness** when someone has offended you.

- You can live from **Christ's humility** when your pride is hurt or you feel unappreciated.
- Living from **Christ's selflessness** means that you put others' needs above your own.

I hope you see through these examples of living from Christ-likeness how radically our lives can be changed. Would you agree that if you are more and more living from Christ-likeness you would call that "abundant life?"

Let me sum up this section this way:

Living "in Christ" means that we **DEPEND** on Christ as our Source in order to be TRANSFORMED into Christ-likeness.

Would you agree that if we are being transformed into Christ-likeness we will become more "spiritually" attractive to those around us? Paul says that we become the "sweet aroma" of Christ:

"But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

2 Corinthians 2:14

[NOTE: Sometimes when people hear the term "Christ-likeness" they believe it means we are becoming deity. That is not true. Rather, as we walk in dependence on God he transforms us to live from Christ-like attitudes (e.g., a Christ-like attitude of love, joy, forgiveness, etc.)]

I hope this chapter has helped you understand the difference between living "in Christ" versus living "in self." If you already know these truths, I hope this chapter has better equipped you to share with others the life we have in Christ.

Let me end this chapter by summarizing the difference between the two:

Living In SELF

The Christian life is a set of rules to follow or a spiritual checklist.

Self is the source with God's help to live the Christian life.

Depend on my self-effort, will-power, self-discipline and ability with God's help to live the Christian life.

Results in living in bondage and defeat

There is no transformation.

Self-centered, self-absorbed life.

Living IN CHRIST

THE Christian life is a Person: Jesus Christ

Christ is the Source to live the Christian life.

Depend on God and His, power moment by moment to live His life in me.

Results in living in Christ's freedom.

I am being transformed into Christ-likeness.

Christ-centered and other-focused life

CHAPTER TWO

Looking At God's Word "In Self" Versus "In Christ"

Introduction

In this chapter, we will be looking at God's word to better understand the difference between living life "in self" versus living life "in Christ."

Information, Revelation, Application and Transformation "In Self" Versus "In Christ"

*"... that the **God** of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may **give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him**. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."*

Ephesians 1:17-18

This verse is crucial to understand the difference between learning and applying God's word "in self" versus "in Christ." In light of this verse, I teach that:

Biblical INFORMATION (God's Word)
Without REVELATION
And APPLICATION
Leads To No TRANSFORMATION.

Before we look at these four phrases "in self" versus "in Christ," let me define "revelation." Revelation is the Holy Spirit's taking His word and giving you a personal understanding of what it means. For example, before you were saved, the Holy Spirit revealed to you that you were a sinner in need of a Savior.

Without the Spirit's revelation you would never have understood your need for Jesus.

a. "In Self"

"In self," we learn God's word intellectually and try to apply it to our lives using our own intellect, ability, self-discipline and willpower. We may even receive personal revelation but we try, in our own strength, to apply what the Holy Spirit has revealed to our lives.

Does this work in transforming us? I can testify that applying God's word "in self" led to no real spiritual transformation. In fact, quite the opposite. Because of all the biblical knowledge I learned and accumulated, I became a critical, condescending, self-righteous Pharisee.

b. "In Christ"

What does learning and applying God's word look like "in Christ?" Look at Galatians 2:20:

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

Paul begins this verse by saying that he is not the source ("*it is no longer I who live.*") Then he acknowledges Christ is the Source ("*Christ lives in me.*") Finally, he says that THE life that he lives is based on faith in Christ. ("*I live by faith in the Son of God.*")

Relating Paul's words to learning and applying God's word "in Christ," means that as you depend on God as your Source, He will give you personal revelation of His word that you then choose by faith to apply to your life. As you do this, you will supernaturally, through the work of the Spirit, experience spiritual growth and transformation. This is how true spiritual transformation takes place.

Let me give you a personal example of when I first heard the truth of Christ as Life.

* **Information** – Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” John 14:6

* **Revelation** – The Holy Spirit revealed to me that the Christian life is a Person and not a set of rules.

* **Application** – Instead of continuing to trying and striving to live the Christian life for God, I am trusting in Christ to live His life in me. - Galatians 2:20

* **Transformation** – As a result, I am now experiencing Christ-likeness. (i.e. Christ’s peace, His love, His victory, His freedom, etc.) - Romans 12:2

As I received the spiritual information (God’s word) through Ian Thomas, the Holy Spirit gave me revelation and confirmation that it is true. As I began applying this truth in my life through dependence on Christ, God started transforming my life to walk in and live from Christ’s peace, love, etc.

I hope this personal example gives you a better understanding of these four phrases in Christ versus in self.

Let me end this section with a question. Is what you know and believe about living the Christian life transforming your life? If not, is it possible that you are trying in and of yourself to be the source to learn and apply God’s word?

Keeping God’s Commands “In Christ” Versus “In Self”

“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

When we see commands like these in the Bible they are meant to be obeyed. However, trying to obey them “in self” is much

different than obeying them “in Christ.” Let’s look at the difference.

Obeying Commands “In Self”

For years, when I came across commands like those listed above, I was taught it was up to me using my ability, willpower and self-discipline to obey those commands. Obedience was always taught in the context of: “It is up to me to obey.” It was a legalistic “have to” or “you better” obey.

The problem is that I could never keep these commands or any others consistently and for any length of time. How about you? Have you, like me, tried and failed to consistently obey God’s commands? The main reason why we, in our own strength, will fail is found in John 15:5:

*“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.**”*

The word I want to focus on in this verse is “nothing.” When you look this word up in the original Greek it means “nothing.” When Jesus says, “*apart from Me you can do nothing*” might that include keeping God’s commands? I believe so because neither you nor I can produce the obedience necessary to consistently keep them.

For me, when I failed to obey the commands, it led to me to self-condemnation and feeling like a failure. All that changed when I learned what it looks like to obey commands in Christ.

Obeying Commands In Christ

As I said, you and I cannot produce the obedience necessary to keep God’s commands. The key issue concerning obedience is our willingness. Whenever we see a command in scripture, we have two choices: either obey it or not. Our choice depends on our willingness to obey. The problem comes when we are

unwilling. This unwillingness comes from our flesh which says, "I don't have to obey, I don't want to obey or I won't obey."

If we are unwilling then how do we move from unwillingness to willingness. We can't. Our willpower at some point loses out to our flesh because the strength of our flesh is stronger than our human willingness.

However, if we choose to depend on God to do so, He will transform our fleshly unwillingness into a spiritual willingness to obey. Philippians 2:13 puts it this way:

*"For God is working in you, **giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.**" (NLT)*

We see in this verse that God is the One who transforms our will and gives us the desire to obey Him. No longer is obedience a legalistic "have to." Rather, it is a spiritual desire put in our hearts by God as we ask Him to do this. Using the meaning of obedience in Christ, let me rephrase 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19:

*[My desire is to] **Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. [My desire is to] not quench the Spirit.**"*

In addition to God's producing the desire to obey, don't we need a greater power than our willpower and self-discipline to continue obeying God's commands? The answer is "yes" and that is why God put all of His power in us. We see this in 2 Corinthians 4:7:

*"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the **surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.**"*

It is through Christ's power that we keep the commands and continuing to keep them. How do we know this is true? Look at how Jesus lived while on the earth. Did He not obey God the Father all the time? He did. So, since Christ dwells in me, I

depend and rely upon Him and His power to obey and keep on obeying His commands through me.

“In Christ” Versus “In Self” Concerning God’s Promises

When it comes to God’s promises, the real issue is whether or not we believe: 1) they are true, and 2) they are true about us. Let me give you a number of verses to make my point.

*“... for with the heart a **person believes**,
resulting in righteousness....” Romans 8:10*

*“Consequently, just as the result of one trespass [sin] was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] the many were made sinners, so also through the **obedience of the One man [Jesus]** the **many will be made righteous**.”* Romans 5:18-19

*“God made Him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that **in Him we** might become the **righteousness of God**.”*
2 Corinthians 5:21

*“... and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness** which comes **from God** on the **basis of faith**.”* Philippians 3:9

The Lord promises us through these verses that as a result of trusting Him for salvation, we are righteous in Christ. Since Christ is our righteousness, then when we walk dependently on Him, we are living from His righteousness.

Promises “In Self”

From an “in self” perspective, we struggle to believe we are righteous “in Christ” because we still sin and live from our fleshly behaviors. The question we ask is, “How can I sin and still be righteous?” We conclude that this cannot be true of us because we still sin. Or we conclude that we need to work harder to sin less and become more righteous.

I was told for years that I had to work to become more righteous. This false belief kept me in bondage to my unbelief that I was righteous in Christ. The problem is, like willingness, we can’t in and of ourselves move ourselves from unbelief to belief. As a result, we stay in bondage to our unbelief and false beliefs.

Promises “In Christ”

When I first read the previous verses, I could not believe them because of my false belief of working to be righteous. The problem is I was stuck in my false beliefs until the Lord revealed to me that the only One who was going to set me free from my false beliefs was Him. I was like the father who brought his demon-possessed son to Jesus in Mark 9:22-24 and said:

*“... if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!’
And Jesus said to him, ‘If You can? **All things are possible to him who believes.**’ Immediately the boy’s father cried out
and said, ‘**I do believe; help my unbelief.**’”*

The promise was that all things were possible to those “who believe.” But the father struggled with unbelief and realized he could not move himself to believe Jesus could heal his son. So, he sought Jesus as his Source to accomplish that.

Before I go any further, let me explain this verse because it uses the word “help” and I said earlier that God was not going to help us. The man starts out by saying, “I do believe” which means he knew what Jesus was saying was true. When he said

“help my unbelief,” he was seeking Christ as the Source to move him from unbelief to belief. He was not asking Jesus to help him be the source to believe. I hope you see the difference.

For me, when it came to believing I was righteous “in Christ” in spite of my sin, I sought the Lord this way:

“Lord, I am trusting you to renew my mind to the truth that I am righteous in You. Persuade me (move me from unbelief to belief) that I don’t have to work to become righteous because You say I am totally righteous in You.”

So, when it comes to God’s promises, our part is to seek Him to renew our minds to the truth. His part, in response, is to move us from unbelief to belief.

CHAPTER THREE

Teaching A Book Of The Bible With An “In Christ” Filter

Based on what we have learned so far, I would now like to focus on what it looks like to teach a book of the Bible through an “in Christ” filter.

What Is An “in Christ” Filter?

In Chapter One, we discussed three key truths that make up an “in Christ” filter:

- 1. Christ is our Source:** (1 Corinthians 1:30; John 14:6)
 - a. To initiate His work in us. (Philippians 1:6)
 - b. To supply/meet our needs. (Philippians 4:19)
 - c. To produce spiritual transformation. (Romans 12:2)
- 2. The Christian life is a life of moment by moment dependence on God.** (John 15:5)
- 3. We are being transformed into Christ-likeness.** (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Christ-Likeness - Living From Christ's:

Unconditional love	Victory	Worth
Acceptance	Faith	Freedom
Patience	Strength	Peace
Forgiveness	Understanding	Security
Fearlessness	Wisdom	Discernment
Christ-confidence	Adequacy	Humility
Boldness	Righteousness	Selflessness
Rest	Compassion	Courage
Hope	Gentleness	Christ-control
Faithfulness	Power	Joy

Concerning the word of God:

An “in Christ” FILTER means seeing God’s word through the truth of Christ being our SOURCE, living in moment-by-moment DEPENDENCE on Him in order to be TRANSFORMED into CHRIST-LIKENESS.

Source, dependence, transformation and Christ-likeness are the four words that make up the “in Christ filter” we will use as we go through passages in Philippians.

Using An “in Christ” Filter Through The Book of Philippians

Keep in mind that the focus of my comments is more focused on looking at these verses “in Christ” versus exegesis (i.e., critical explanation or interpretation of a text). You may want to refer to the list of Christ-like characteristics on page 12 as we go through these passages.

Verses From Chapter One

Philippians 1:6

“For I am confident (Christ-confidence) of this very thing, that He (God as the Source) who began a good work in you will carry it (to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

When Paul talks says, “I am confident,” this is not a self-confidence but a Christ-confidence supplied by Christ (Christ-likeness). We saw in an earlier chapter that God as the Source initiated the work (“*began a good work in you*”) in our lives and will be the Source to transform us into Christ-likeness (“*Will carry it to completion*”).

Philippians 1:9

*“And this I pray, that **your love (Christ-likeness)** may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all **discernment. (Christ-likeness)**”*

When Paul says “your love” this is not a man-produced love. This is the unconditional love of Christ (Christ-likeness). Not only will you live from Christ’s love, it will abound (overflow) to others. (One of the original meanings of the word “abound” is overflow.)

The discernment Paul is talking about is not a human discernment. Rather, it is Christ-like discernment.

Philippians 1:20

*“... according to my earnest expectation and **hope (Christ-likeness)**”, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all **boldness (Christ-likeness)**”, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.”*

The “hope” Paul is talking about is not a human hope that may or may not happen. It is a Christ-like hope which is translated “confident expectation” or “certainty.” The boldness Paul is referring to is Christ-like boldness which means “free and fearless confidence.”

Philippians 1:21

*“For to me, **to live is Christ (Christ as my Source)** and to die is gain.”*

In this verse, which we looked at in Lesson One, Paul is affirming that Christ Himself is the Christian life and as such is the Source to live it. It is not a set of rules, commands or spiritual checklists.

Philippians 1:27

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (moment by moment dependence), so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that **you are standing firm in one spirit**, with **one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.**”(the results if we, together, are living in dependence on Christ)

How do we conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ? We walk in moment by moment dependence on Christ as our Source. As Christ lives in me, He will produce in me and through me the spiritual conduct (i.e., behavior) that Paul is referring to.

We stand firm in the Spirit the same way. We are not capable of standing firm in and of ourselves. However, in Christ's strength (Christ-likeness), we can stand firm.

“Striving together” means that as we depend on God together, we will be of one mind (i.e., unity). Isn't all the division going on in our churches today likely the result of our not growing into Christ-likeness?

Verses From Chapter Two

Philippians 2:2

“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of **love (Christ-likeness)**, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, **if any affection (Christ-likeness)**, and **compassion (Christ-likeness)**, make my joy (Christ-likeness) complete by being of the **same mind**, maintaining the **same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.**(the results if we, together, are living in dependence on Christ)”

Love, affection, compassion and joy are Christ-like characteristics that we will experience as we are being

transformed. Doesn't it make spiritual sense that if we are all being transformed into Christ-likeness, then we will be of the same mind, living from and expressing Christ's love, united in spirit and intent one purpose? I believe that the "one purpose" is to share Christ for salvation to the non-Christian and share Christ as Life to the Christian.

Philippians 2:3-4

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit (depending Christ's power), but with humility (Christ-likeness) of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

As we discussed before about God's commands, we can't keep them in our own strength. So, it is only from depending on Christ's power that we're able to keep this command. The "humility of mind" is a Christ-like humility. As a result of being transformed to live from Christ's humility, we will become more selfless and sacrificial (Christ-likeness).

Philippians 2:12-13

"So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed (depending on Christ's power), not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation (depending on Christ) with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you (God is your Source), both to will and to work for His good pleasure."

As we discussed, obedience is God-produced. As we live in dependence on Christ, we will be obedient. "Work out your salvation" means that now that you are saved, the "working out" of your salvation is your depending on God to work in and through you to transform you into Christ-likeness. [Note: This verse has nothing to do with salvation based on works.]

“With fear and trembling” means that as we are being transformed, we have a Christ-like attitude of humility, respect and awe of God. *“For it is God who is at work in you”* confirms that God as your Source is the initiator, producer and transformer of our lives.

Verses From Chapter Three

Philippians 3:3

*“... for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and **put no confidence in the flesh.** (God, not self is the Source.)”*

Paul is addressing legalism when he says that we are to *“put no confidence in the flesh.”* Our confidence can only be in Christ as our Source for living life “in Christ.”

Philippians 3:8,9

*“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the **surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (As my source and Life)**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I **may gain Christ, (As my source and Life)** and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, **the righteousness (Christ-likeness)** which comes from God on the basis of faith.”*

When Paul says, “I count all things loss,” he is proclaiming that anything outside of knowing Christ is of little value (rubbish) compared to the “surpassing value of knowing Christ” as His Life and Source. Through our dependence on Christ and our spiritual transformation, we will have no greater priority than knowing Christ at the deepest levels. (*gaining Christ*)

We saw in a previous chapter that the righteousness referred to in this verse is not self-righteousness. It is God's righteousness in us (Christ-likeness) that we can live from as we walk by faith.

Philippians 3:12

*“Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I **press on (in moment by moment dependence on Christ)** so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”*

“Press on” does not mean we are to work more or try harder in and of ourselves. It means we are to continue depending on Christ moment by moment.

Verses From Chapter Four

Philippians 4:4

*“**Rejoice in the Lord always (as you depend on Christ);** again I will say, rejoice!”*

We fulfill this command as we live from, depend on and draw on Christ's joy. Christ is the source of His supernatural joy. If we lived moment by moment in dependence on Christ, would we not “always” experience Christ's joy even in the midst of our struggles? Look again at what Paul says in Colossians 1:24:

“I am overflowing with joy in the midst of my suffering.”

Philippians 4:6, 7

*“**Be anxious for nothing (depend on Christ as your Source),** but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. **And the peace of God (Christ-likeness),** which surpasses all*

understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

This command, “*be anxious for nothing*,” becomes a promise when we depend on Christ as our Source to be our peace. In other words, if I am walking in Christ’s peace, I won’t be anxious. This peace, as we talked about earlier, is a supernatural (“*which surpasses all understanding*”) Christ-like peace that no person and nothing else (e.g., adverse circumstances, negative relationships, ill health, etc.) and can steal from you.

Philippians 4:11, 12

“Not that I speak from want, for I have learned (through dependence on Christ) to be (transformed to become) content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need.”

First of all, the contentment that is described here is a supernatural, Christ-like contentment which, unlike a human contentment, does not change regardless of what we are experiencing. When Paul says he has “learned,” it means that as he lived in dependence on God, Paul received a supernatural contentment that did not change regardless of his circumstances.

Philippians 4:13

“I can do all things through Him (Christ as my Source) who strengthens (Christ-likeness) me.”

This is a crucial verse to see through an “in Christ” filter because people tend to use this verse as proof that they can be the source with God’s help to do all things. But what this

verse is really saying is that as we depend on Christ as our Source, He will do “all things” through us. And the phrase “strengthens me” means that as we walk by faith in Him, He will be our strength (Christ-likeness).

Philippians 4:19

*“And **my God will supply (as your Source)** all your needs **(Christ-likeness)** according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

God is the Source to supply all of your needs including your emotional and spiritual needs as well. Your spiritual needs are met in Christ. (Christ-likeness).

Conclusion

I hope by looking at these verses through an “in Christ” filter, it has given you a clearer understanding of how living dependently on God as your Source will produce Christ-likeness in you.

Looking at scripture through an “in Christ” filter, will bring you greater clarity and understanding of what it means to live in Christ, while scripture itself will become more alive, dynamic and transforming to you.

If you have struggled with anything I have shared in this chapter, I would encourage you to spend time with the Lord asking Him to reveal to you whether what I have shared here is the truth.

CHAPTER FOUR

Teaching Through A Christian Book Using An “In Christ” filter

Introduction

There are an abundance of Christian books and study available to read individually and to use for home groups. But few of these materials are written purely from an “in Christ” perspective. So, whenever I read a Christian book or study, I ask myself these questions:

- Point me to Christ as the Source or point me to self as the source.
- Will this book focus on me totally depending on Christ or depending on my own intellect, ability, willpower, and self-discipline, with God’s help, to accomplish what it tells me to do?
- Will this book be a checklist of things to do for God or for someone else in order to get something from Him or them? Or will it point me to the Holy Spirit to accomplish His truth, will and purposes in and through me?
- Will this book be about tips and techniques that I, in my own strength and ability, need to accomplish so that my Christian life, marriage, or my relationships with others will be improved or will it point me to the total sufficiency of Christ to be transformed?

As a result of these questions, I divide books primarily into two categories: Christ-centered or performance-driven. Let me explain the difference.

Difference Between A Performance-Driven Book Versus A Christ-Centered Book

Performance-Driven Book

I define a “performance-driven” book as any Christian book that points to me (the reader) as the source, that focuses on my depending on myself, or focuses on a “to do” checklist or tips and techniques that I must do in order to improve my life, my marriage, my behavior, etc.

Christ-Centered Book

A “Christ-centered” book is any Christian book that points to Christ as the Source, focuses on totally depending on Christ to accomplish the truths the author is trying to convey, or draws me into a deeper dependence on God.

What is the result or outcome of one book versus the other?

The Outcome Of A Performance-Driven Book Versus A Christ-Centered Book

Christ-Centered Book

The following are outcomes that I (and others I have ministered to) have experienced when reading a Christ-centered book:

- Gives me a deeper belief and understanding that Christ is my Source for living THE Christian life.
- Reinforces my need for total dependence on God versus dependence on self.
- Deepens my understanding that apart from Christ I can do nothing (e.g., renew my own mind, set myself free, transform myself, etc.)

- Points me to the total sufficiency of Christ to accomplish His will and purposes in my life.
- Gives me a greater reliance on God's power to transform me into Christ-likeness.

Performance-Driven Book

If I am **not** using an “in Christ” filter when I read it, a performance-driven book can result in the following:

- Focusing more on myself as the source.
- Depending on my intellect and ability to transform myself.
- Trying to accomplish tips and techniques that, while they may temporarily improve my situation, they will not permanently transform my life, my marriage, or my other relationships.
- Reinforcing the “I can do it on my own” mindset.
- Experiencing more defeat, more bondage, and more woundedness.
- When I fail at doing what the author asks me to do for God or for someone else, I feel like a failure or I feel self-condemnation.
- Experiencing an unchanged life or even worse.

Unfortunately, I have experienced all of these things. In addition, these books did not draw me into a deeper belief that Christ is the Source; did not draw me into a deeper dependence on God; and may have only temporarily improved things but did not supernaturally transform my life.

[**Note:** What I have discovered is that a non-Christian can read books like these and possibly do a better job of accomplishing

what is asked because they may have greater self-discipline, willpower or determination.]

Using An “In Christ” filter In Teaching A Performance-Driven Book

As much as I would love for all Christian books to be Christ-centered, many of them aren’t. Does that mean that we should not read them? No, not at all. Why? Even though it is a performance-driven book, it can still be taught with an “in Christ” filter.

I believe ANY Christian book can have SPIRITUAL value if it is taught through an “In Christ” filter.

What It Looks Like To Teach A Book With An “In Christ” filter

What I would like to do is to look at a very popular book on marriage through an “In Christ” filter. I won’t be sharing the title of the book but there are some key points in this book that I would like to use to illustrate how to teach a performance-driven book through an “In Christ” filter.

My responses to the author’s comments will be as if I am teaching them to you through an “In Christ” filter.

The key things to remember as I share from this book are:

- Who is the source to accomplish the things the author is saying to do?
- If you are the source to accomplish what the author suggests, will that just improve your marriage or transform it?
- By whose power will change take place?

- Does what the author say put the responsibility on you to produce results?
- What if after accomplishing a tip or technique a spouse does not respond like the author says they will?
- What if you are not willing to do the things the author says?
- Is the Holy Spirit brought in as the One who produces the supernatural transformation?
- Can a non-Christian read this book and do the same things the author suggests using their own willpower and possibly get the same or better results?
- If a particular technique is used “in self” versus “in Christ,” could that become a form of manipulation of others?

Teaching Through An “In Christ” Filter

For each point that the author shares, I will pose the problem with that point, give an “in Christ” perspective of that point, and finish with what it looks like to engage God as the Source to produce the points the author is trying to make. I will be writing this as if I am teaching you through an “In Christ” filter. As a reminder, the four words that make up an “in Christ” filter are source, dependence, transformation and Christ-likeness.

1. There are powerful tools that you can use to SAVE a marriage.

The Problem: There are several tools (tips and techniques) listed in this book but all of them come back to you as the source to take those tools and, using your own resources, try to save your marriage. If you are the source, you can use these tools to try to improve your marriage but they will not supernaturally transform it.

In Christ: Tools (tips and techniques) can be helpful but lack the power of the Spirit to make any significant change. However, if the Spirit is leading you to use a tool and it is done dependent on Him, then the Spirit can use it to transform a marriage.

Engaging God: “Lord, is there something you want to say or do through me (give a word of encouragement, listen, speak a word of truth, etc.) towards my spouse. If so, I am relying on You, not the “tool,” to transform me and/or my spouse.”

2. The wife DECIDED to believe that she is to love her husband despite his shortcomings.

The Problem: What if you choose not to make the decision to love your husband in spite of his shortcomings? What if you have been wounded so deeply by your husband that your flesh says “no” when it comes to loving your husband?

In Christ: If you are willing, then you will make spiritual decisions in reliance on God. However, if you are not willing, you need the power of the Holy Spirit to move you from unwillingness to willingness. If you struggle with making a decision to love your spouse, seek the Holy Spirit to give you the willingness.

Engaging God: “Lord, as much as I would like to decide to love my spouse, my wounded flesh is preventing me. Transform my heart and overcome my flesh so that I will be willing to love him.”

3. Even though your spouse has their faults, they CAN CONTROL them so they won't get out of control and cause conflict in the marriage.

The Problem: The inference here is that you are in control with the result that your faults won't get out of control.

In Christ: While we all have our faults, some of them we can control but others have such a grip on our lives that when the faults are triggered, we can't control them in and of ourselves.

Engaging God: “Lord, I struggle with anger. I am under the illusion I can keep it under control. The truth is that I am not in control, therefore, I am trusting Your control to keep this struggle from creating conflict in my marriage.”

4. The author then says that he has “common sense” techniques to “HELP” husbands and wives resolve their marital struggles.

The Problem: Common sense techniques are not spiritual answers to problems. They may help resolve a marital problem in the moment but they don’t necessarily address the root cause of the problem. Without the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal the root cause of problems and to deal with them, then common sense techniques are just putting band-aids on what may be hemorrhaging wounds.

In Christ: It is only by your seeking the Spirit to reveal the root causes of your marital struggles and then seeking His power to set you free from those struggles will you ever experience true transformation. The key is that techniques may improve your marriage but will not transform it.

Engaging God: “Lord, I am struggling with listening to my spouse. Transform my heart by revealing to me how important that is and give me the willingness to do so.”

5. You will learn how to communicate with your spouse and when you do he/she WILL respond in love.

The Problem: This is a core problem with all tips and technique books. They point to you as the source and then advise, in this case, that if you properly communicate with your spouse, they will love you in return. What if you are the most spiritual, loving communicator on the planet and they still don’t respond in love? Then what do you do? Try another common-sense technique? Unfortunately, tips and techniques done in self can be a form of manipulation.

In Christ: When it comes to communicating with your spouse, seek the Spirit to give you the words you need in the moment: words of love, encouragement, grace, compassion, etc. If you speak those words in the Spirit, and your spouse does not respond in love, don't think you have failed because you have no control over how your spouse (or anyone else) does or does not respond.

Engaging God: "Lord, I struggle with communicating with my spouse. I am asking You to give me the willingness, put the right words in my mind to say and then give me Your heart in saying them. If my spouse, does not respond, remind me that if I have communicated in the Spirit then I am not responsible for his/her response."

6. You CAN meet your spouse's needs by turning off the TV or getting off your computer and focusing on him or her.

The Problem: Turning off the TV or getting off your computer and focusing on your spouse may be a good thing but the question is, "What will be your motive in doing so?" Is your motive an "ought to", "have to" or "need to?" Or because the book told me to? Or is it a spiritual desire put there by the Holy Spirit?

In Christ: If you are watching TV or you are on your computer, and the Spirit tells you to turn it off and spend time with your spouse, then you need to respond to the Spirit's leading. What if you sense the Spirit prompting you to do that but you can't tear yourself away from the TV or computer? At that point, seek the Spirit to persuade you that your spouse is infinitely more important than any TV program or what you are doing on the computer.

Engaging God: "Lord, I know I need to turn off this football game and spend time with my spouse but my fleshly desire to watch is greater than my spiritual desire to obey you. Please transform my heart to make my spiritual desire greater than my fleshly desire.

7. A great marriage will happen when tension is dealt with CREATIVELY.

The Problem: There may be creative ways to “cope” with marital tension but apart from the Holy Spirit’s work in the hearts of both you and your spouse, then tension will continue and may get worse. (I define “coping” as methods or strategies to try and deal with marital struggles independent of God.)

In Christ: Tension in marriage is inevitable. However, as each of you engages God to transform you into Christ-likeness, the tension can be significantly lessened. This is because you and your spouse are functioning more in your Christ-likeness (e.g., love, peace, forgiveness, acceptance, etc.).

Engaging God: “Expose the source of our tension and transform our hearts so that we will love and give grace to one another instead of allowing our flesh to create conflict.”

8. You and your spouse CAN work your problems out.

The Problem: There may be some problems that in and of yourself you can work out if you are willing. But how do you deal with the deep struggles that you just can’t get past or set yourself free from? You need a greater power than your will power to overcome deep struggles in your marriage.

In Christ: Paul says in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things through Christ” which, as I said previously, means that as you and your spouse seek the Holy Spirit to get to the root of the problem and set you free from your fleshly behaviors that are causing the problem, then your struggles in those areas will no longer be an issue or will have less of a negative impact on your marriage.

Engaging God: “Lord, we need You as our Source to renew our minds to the truth and transform our fleshly behaviors that are creating conflict in our marriage into Christ-like behaviors.”

I could give you several more examples but I think you now have a better picture of what it means to look at a Christian book through an “in Christ” filter. These same principles apply to a Christian study. Let me finish this chapter by letting you give “in Christ” responses to some of my comments about this book.

What Is Your “In Christ” Response?

Based on what you have learned so far about an “in Christ” filter, what is the truth concerning the following statements about the book we just went through?

1. Nowhere in the book does it take you to Christ as your Source.

2. It never talks about engaging the Holy Spirit to deal with a couple’s marital struggles.

3. At the end of each chapter the author gives a “to do” checklist for a spouse to be loved. Here are some examples.

- Hold hands.
- Go for a walk.
- Spend quality time together.
- Don’t interrupt your spouse when they are talking.

4. The author uses scripture but then tells us that it is up to us to apply them in our own strength.

5. There is no mention of what it looks like in marriage to walk in the Spirit and live from His power.

6. Nothing is said about engaging the power of the Holy Spirit to transform your marriage.

I hope this chapter has helped you to discern the difference between a Christ-centered book and a performance-driven book. I also hope it has shown you how to take a performance-driven book and teach it “in Christ.”

CONCLUSION

There is much more I could write but I pray that what I have shared and what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you will help you to better understand life “in Christ” versus life “in self.” It is my hope that these insights will help you more deeply discern the Word of God and also be able to redeem a performance-based Christian book by using your “in Christ” filter.

I can personally bear witness that the truths I have shared with you have given me new “spiritual” eyes through which to see my Christian life and God’s word. I pray it will do the same for you.

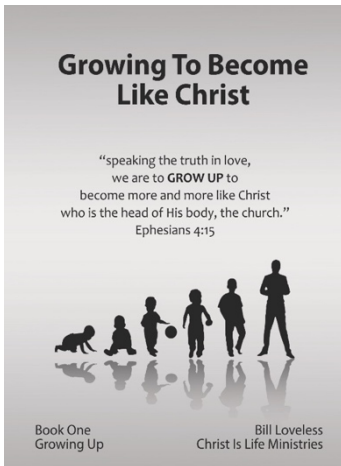
Blessings in Christ,

Bill Loveless

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.

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(2025-08-08)

SHARING LIFE "IN CHRIST"

The focus of the booklet is to share with facilitators, teachers, small group leaders and individuals how to share the basic message of Christ as Life and how to equip them to teach/facilitate through a book of the Bible, a Christian book and a Christian curriculum through an "in Christ" perspective.

The booklet topics:

- How to share Christ as Life.
- Definition of an "in Christ" perspective.
- Why teaching through an "in Christ" lens is critical.
- Applying an "in Christ" perspective to a book of the Bible.
- Applying an "in Christ" perspective to a Christian book or curriculum.



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

