

Be *That* Christian Who...

Knows that the New Testament is the sole source of authority for life and godliness. Why the New Testament? The Old Testament, while *inspired* and *profitable* (cf. Romans 15:4), was the Law of God for Jews at Mt. Horeb (Sinai, cf. Deuteronomy 5:1-5), until the cross of Jesus Christ, Hebrews 9:15-17. It was fulfilled by Jesus and superseded by “*the gospel of the kingdom*,” Luke 16:16, the *New Testament*. Furthermore, what you or I think or feel or believe doesn’t cut it either- what God has said in the New Testament is vital. The “*word of His grace*” is that “*which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified*,” Acts 20:32. Be *that* Christian who knows this.

Understands that “worship” is about *pleasing God* instead of self. The act of *worship* is supposed to pay *homage, reverence, and praise* to God for who He is and what He has done, Hebrews 13:15. Attempts to placate and pleasure attendees fall feebly flat of that purpose. There is no doubt that the act of worshipping God also benefits the participants, but its focus must remain on God and what pleases Him. The New Testament says nothing of choirs or orchestras, dramatic performances or praise dancing- why not let God tell us in His word what pleases Him instead of doing what we like, and expecting Him to accept it? Be *that* Christian who *worships* God “*in spirit and truth*,” John 4:23-24.

Regards others as more important than self. Selfishness is at the heart (and in it too) of almost every sin we commit. We *want* and *do* what pleases us. Throughout His life, Jesus did the will of God and served others, Matthew 20:28. The only way to follow His example is to *want, do, and take pleasure* from doing God’s will instead of our own. Such requires *selflessness* instead of *selfishness*. “*Do nothing from selfishness, or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others*,” Philippians 2:3-4. Only in this way can we “*Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus*,” Philippians 2:5. Be that *selfless*, rather than *selfish*, Christian!

Loves those who don’t love them. “Oh no, I just *can’t* love and be nice to people that hate and mistreat me!” Then you can’t be a *child* of God because that is not only what He did, but also what He requires of His children. “*But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you; in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven...*,” Matthew 5:43-44. Jesus went on to say (vv.46-47) that even the godless love those who love them. Christians have a higher calling- one that emulates their Father who loved those opposed to Him enough to offer His own Son as a sacrifice to save them. *Wholeness/completeness* is found only in *loving* and *doing* as God does, Matthew 5:48. Be *that* Christian who *loves* and *does* as God and Christ have done.

Loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. Note that Hebrews 1:9 doesn’t say Jesus “loved the righteous and hated the lawless,” but rather “*righteousness*” and “*lawlessness*.” The difference is huge. To hate the *lawless* would violate Matthew 5:43-44 as demonstrated in the previous paragraph. Instead, and simplified for the sake of clarity, to be like God and be His child we must love *right conduct* and *hate wrong conduct*. Admittedly, it is difficult to “hate the sin” and “love the sinner.” But such is exactly what God does, and what He expects His own to do also. Unfortunately, the tendency is to think of these things in regard to other people’s conduct. What about our own conduct? Be that Christian who *loves righteousness* and *hates lawlessness* in his own life first, and then also in the lives of others.

Appreciates the value of every soul. While all *lives* do indeed matter, all *souls* matter even more, cf. Matthew 16:25-26. While every Christian should appreciate the value of *his own* soul, he must also appreciate the value of *every* soul. Such will cause him to think, feel, speak, and act in a way that enables the saving of as many souls as possible. Be *that* Christian who can’t stand the thought of any soul meeting its Maker in judgment without first having had the opportunity to hear and obey the gospel.

Wakes each morning and thinks, “What can I do today that will glorify God?” To *glorify* is to *praise* and *honor*. If such is regarded as our daily privilege, then our thoughts, intentions, and activities take on a new and *sanctified* (set apart as holy) purpose. Sure, we have daily tasks and duties that are not particularly *holy* in nature. But still yet, even they can be accomplished in a way that brings honor and glory to God, cf. Colossians 3:17 – 4:6. Consider Jesus’ words of Mathew 5:16 in this regard, “*Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven*.” Be that Christian who everyday seeks to *glorify* God in everything. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org; email to mrpcstrong@hotmail.com)