



PRINCIPLES

OF PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

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The purpose of this article is to emphasize the principles of practical Christian living. It is an absolute truth that no building can survive against the weather or the natural catastrophes without a strong foundation. Christian living also has to be built on the solid foundation of the Holy Bible. It is not just a pattern that one should fall into, but rather a Christian discipline and values that we should embrace in our pilgrim journey to weather the storms of life.

1. Have Devotion Or Quiet Time In Your Personal Life

Throughout the Bible, we read about many great men and women who made prayer and supplication an integral part of their lives. Such a practice had become a passionate part of their lives. I heard a sermon the other day in which an account was given about someone who mockingly questioned a prayerful man, "What did you gain by praying?" The reply came in the following words, "I have not gained much, but I lost many natures of my flesh such as anger, jealousy, lust and the list goes on." Ephesians 6:18 (NIV) says, *"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on*

praying for all the Lord's people." Daniel prayed three times a day in the land in which he was captured (Babylon). In Daniel 6:10 (NIV), we read *"Now when Daniel learned that the decree had been published, he went home to his upstairs room where the windows opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God, just as he had done before."* King David is another great example of a praying man who consistently praised God through the Psalms he wrote. It is very important to begin the day with prayer and end the day with prayer.

2. Feed The Fire

Keeping the zeal for God is imperative in our Christian life. It is very easy for one member in the body of Christ to be discouraged by someone's comments or actions. But no one can put out the fire for God in you, unless you lend yourself to the tricks of the enemy. Always look for opportunities to feed the fire that is in you, and do not associate with people who will dampen your spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 (NIV) says, *"Do not quench the Spirit."* A positive, good spirit is essential for our Christian walk.

One of the brethren in the Move said, "Your attitude determines your altitude." In our fellowship we must come with a good attitude, which means leaving behind all our bad attitudes and arising wholly into another level in the realm of the Spirit. We have to encourage each other in prophecy, singing and giving testimonies. The little fire in each of us will burn together with the fire in others to create a huge flame of spiritual fire in all of us. As the fire in us keeps burning, we will be able to feel the shedding of our flesh. In Leviticus 6:12 we read, *"The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it."* The altar has to have the fire in order to burn the fat. The fat can be referred to as the nature of the flesh as found in Galatians 5:19. The lampstand in the tabernacle should be burning to give out light. In Leviticus 24: 2 (NIV) we read, *"Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning regularly."* Exodus 27:20-21 (NIV) we read, *"You shall command the people of Israel that they bring to you pure beaten olive oil for the light, that a lamp may regularly be set up to burn. In the tent of meeting, outside the veil that is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening to morning before the Lord. It shall be a statute forever to be observed throughout their generations by the people of Israel."* The fire here obviously alludes to our undiminished spiritual fervor for God.

3. Resist The Devil

In Matthew 6:12 we read, *"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."* Jesus Himself had to resist the devil when he was tested after he had finished fasting, as we read in Matthew 4:8-11, *"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'If you will bow down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.' Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him"*(NIV). Jesus had to confront the devil so that he would leave him. In James 4:7 we read, *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* We cannot resist the devil by using any earthly weapons. There is a constant struggle for a believer in this walk of Christian living. Believe it or not, the devil is working very hard to disrupt, distract and destroy families. The only way to defeat the enemy is by praying together in our families, especially young families. It is also very important that we attend our local church meetings as a family. The family that prays and attends church together will stay together.

On one occasion, the disciples could not drive the demon out of the person. Jesus told his disciples that this will not go except by fasting and prayer. *"When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him"* (Matthew 17:14, NIV). *"The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said,*

'He's dead.' But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why couldn't we drive it out?' He replied, 'This kind can come out only by prayer and fasting'" (Mark 9:26-29, NIV). We need to fast and pray to resist the devil.

4. Let Go Of The Past

It is very important that we put behind the things of the past and look to the now and the future. If we hold on to the unpleasant past it is not going to help our journey. During the wilderness journey, the Israelites had always lingered on their past, forgetting the wonderful Promised Land that they were going to inherit. Many a time we lose our blessings because of dwelling on past hurtful memories. Comparison between the past and the present will not help us in leading a victorious Christian life. We should be able to unlearn the past and learn new things of the realm of the Spirit. In 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) we read, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"* Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV) says, *"Forget the former things; do not dwell in the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."*

5. Forgive Others

Forgiveness is a quality we must have in order to go on to "sonship." Jesus spoke of forgiveness as a qualification for being forgiven by our Father in heaven. *"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins"* (Matthew 6:14-15). If we harbor grudges or vengeance against someone and have not forgiven him/her, we are making ourselves prisoners of our past. An unforgiving nature is like a festering, unhealed wound. It only leads towards self-decay. Let not our flesh raise its ugly head to block any blessing that can be ours, so that we might become partakers of the divine nature. In 2 Peter 1:3-9 (NIV) we read, *"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For, if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins."*

6. Practice Rejoicing

Central to our walk with the Lord is to rejoice and refresh ourselves in all circumstances. In Philippians 4:4 we read, *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice."*, *"This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength"* says Nehemiah in chapter 8:10. *"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"* (John 14:27). We ought to cultivate a habit of rejoicing. Jesus said, in John 15:11 (NIV), *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."* It is a joy that is within us, and that fruit of the Spirit must come forth in our lives. If there is no joy in your home, there will be no joy in the church. Lack of joy will lead to emptiness and apathy. Christian joy must be contagious enough to fill your home and church alike to wipe away the tears and afflictions of life. It is not being unconcerned regarding the things of life, but rather it is finding joy and strength even in our trials and tribulations. When Paul wrote to the Philippians to rejoice always, he was in the Roman prison waiting for judgment. In Romans 8:18 (NIV) we read, *"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* Try to replace anger, jealousy and an unforgiving nature with joy. It is very hard to minister or worship without the joy of the Lord. Try to smile at a person with your whole heart rather than being serious and grumpy when you see a person face to face even when you don't know the person. Especially, when you come to church, greet one another from a sincere heart with joy, and that will encourage the person and cause him/her to feel that he/she belongs in that church. Choose joy over sadness. Renew and refresh with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV), *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

7. Learn To Be Flexible

Being flexible means to be willing to yield or being pliable. The secret of the Christian life is accepting Jesus as our Potter and willing to become clay in His hands. Being rigid and inflexible gives no room for our Maker to work on us. Being inflexible means being stubborn and disobedient regarding God's plan for our lives. Saul, the first king of Israel, started off very well, but later on during his reign, he decided to do what he felt was right in regard to the plunder from the Amalekites. When Samuel anointed Saul, he asked him to attack the Amalekites and destroy them completely. Saul decided to spare the life of Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and also to bring the sheep and cattle to offer as sacrifices. Samuel replied: *"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king"* (1 Samuel 15:22-23, NIV). Obedience is the key to the kingdom of God. Be flexible and pliable in the hands of God so you can be used of Him.

8. Pace Yourself

The Christian life is not a sprint, but rather a marathon. Allow God to carry out His perfect plan for your life. Moses instructed Joshua, his disciple, on how to lead the people of Israel after his death. Joshua 1:6-9 says *"Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* This portion of scripture is a classic example for us to be cognizant of in our journey. When we let God be our almighty God, He will be with us wherever we go. When the Israelites were in the wilderness for forty years they were led by the cloud. When the cloud stopped moving they stopped and when the cloud started moving they followed the cloud. Numbers 9:21-23 (NIV) says *"If sometimes the cloud remained from evening until morning, when the cloud was lifted in the morning, they would move out; or if it remained in the daytime and at night, whenever the cloud was lifted, they would set out. Whether it was two days or a month or a year that the cloud lingered over the tabernacle, staying above it, the sons of Israel remained camped and did not set out; but when it was lifted, they did set out. At the command of the LORD they camped, and at the command of the LORD they set out; they kept the LORD'S charge, according to the command of the LORD through Moses."* The cloud is a type of the Holy Spirit.

9. Seek God Every Day

In Matthew 6:33 (NIV) we read, *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."* Seeking God implies that we should be constantly looking to God for our needs, problems or anything else. *"Seek and you shall find, ask and you shall receive and knock and it shall open"* (Luke 11:9). In Hebrews 11, we have the list of men and women who always sought God in their journey of faith. While seeking God we will be able to enter into a spiritual realm and remain in divine fellowship. Moses when he spent forty days on the Holy Mountain, his face shone and people who were waiting at the base of the mountain could not look at his face because of the glory of God. Enoch walked with God, and he was not seen because God took him.

10. Discover Your Spiritual Gift In The Body Of Christ

The church is the body of Christ and each person is a member in particular. As each part of the natural body has a specific function, so also the members of the spiritual body have specific functions to perform. Each member of the natural body functions as it is naturally designed to do. In a spiritual body every member has a function.

It may be showing mercy, helping the poor, prophesying, singing, teaching, administration or the ministry of intercession. Romans 12:4-8 says, *"For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophecy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."* We have to know what our gifts are and be willing to use them humbly as a member in the body of Christ. Just as the many parts of the body function from the commands of the brain, the spiritual body must also function under the unction of the Holy Spirit.

In conclusion, our spiritual life must be goal-oriented with a quiet time, prayer, fervor, forgiveness, being flexible, steadfastness, discovering our gifts in the body and being in total surrender to the plan of God. †



Do you have confidence that you have eternal life? Do you have the assurance that your sins are forever forgiven because of the work of the Cross of Jesus Christ? If you would like to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour, have your sins forgiven, and have your name written into the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 20:11-15), you may do so right now.

The Bible says that Jesus, the Son of God, loves you! *"For God so loved the world (that means you!) that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16, NKJV).

The Bible says that Jesus is the way to eternal life: *"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'"* (John 14:6, NKJV).

The Bible says that we are saved by grace through faith: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8, NKJV).

The Bible says that you may accept Jesus into your heart and be saved through faith: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him (have fellowship with him), and he with Me"* (Revelations 3:20, NKJV).

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10, NKJV).

If you wish to receive salvation, and have your sins forgiven by accepting Jesus Christ as your personal saviour into your life, You may consider praying a prayer similar to this:

Dear Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner, and I ask you to forgive my sins and save me. I repent of my sins (turn from my sinful ways), and accept your saving grace. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I ask you to come into my heart right now. Thank you. Amen. †

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