

Here is How the Christian Life Works

This brief study encapsulates the essential steps and/or components of the Christian life, summarizing meaningful events in the life of believers, from infancy to full maturity. This synopsis gives a thumbnail sketch of the truth, as we have seen it and taught it. Here, in essence, is how the Christian life works:

1. Every human being with consciousness has an awareness of God, as elicited by observation of the created world. But not everyone wants to pursue God, and hell itself would not convince human beings who are negative toward God to seek Him. Some, however, have an interest in God, and are open to truths about Him.
2. Those who have “positive volition” toward God will get the gospel message that Christ has paid for the sins of mankind, removing the sin barrier between man and God. Those who want the truth...get it. All that remains is for them to believe that the work of Christ was actually done for them, and that He is alive today—*as* God and *with* God—to receive those who believe in Him, placing them into the royal family of God. When any human being believes in Jesus Christ, he is instantly and eternally saved, and permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit.
3. Immediately following salvation, the infant believer must feed on the Word of God to grow. As he grows, he learns how the Christian life is lived, and begins to implement the techniques he acquires, which accelerate his (or her) growth.
4. Unfortunately, salvation does not remove the sinful nature, which, from birth, has a love for sin and a resistance toward God. The result is that sins occur frequently in the life of a new believer, even though his “zeal” for godly things may be evident.
5. One of the techniques a new believer should learn is *confession of sins*. Hiding sins from God keeps them on our sin record, which God has a clear view of. He wants us to have the humility to recognize that we are weak, but He is strong, and confession shows that we trust Him to remove our sins and help us toward improvement. Confession brings God’s forgiveness.
6. When we sin, we lose fellowship, or communion, with God. The result of this is not the loss of salvation, but our being cut off from the positive influences of the Holy Spirit within us. Instead of the Holy Spirit controlling us, our sinful nature takes over. But when we *confess our sins*, we are forgiven and the Holy Spirit resumes control. As new or intermediate believers, we must confess constantly to stay afloat, since, if we are not in fellowship, we will not be able to move forward spiritually. Fellowship only lasts, after all, until we sin again.
7. Satan, his world, and our sinful nature combine with the “law of sin” to conspire against us and

take us down spiritually in order to move us away from God. They know that if we can be kept at a distance from God and His strength, we will be powerless to resist sin or self-made righteousness. The forces of evil are supernatural and we cannot stop them, apart from the power of God. Fellowship with God strengthens us against them. Unfortunately, very few believers follow a consistent pattern of confession that would enable them to STAY in fellowship and thus resist evil. We must confess and return to God when we sin, which is often. (If we do not, God will correct us through discipline to prompt us to confess and be restored.)

8. As we are confessing, we must also be *learning more about God* and His systems. This means we must become familiar with God's grace techniques and assets, which are designed to enable us to access God's strength. God's grace systems will enable us to live in the power of His Spirit. When we are faithful in our confession and our learning, we will spend more and more time in fellowship, which facilitates our growth.
9. We will learn along the way to pray effectively, think about God constantly, give thanks consistently, and—most importantly—trust incessantly. These will help us grow to the point that we can stay in fellowship so faithfully that we can live in the strength of the Holy Spirit.
10. If we continue learning and applying what we know, fellowship and learning will converge, beginning a symbiotic exchange in which each aids the other. The result is *advanced* growth. In other words, if we are confessing often to stay in fellowship, and are absorbing God's truths, we will be advancing rapidly in our spiritual capacity for communion and service.
11. What is it that grows when we confess often and spend time learning God's ways? It is our faith. As faith strengthens, our perspective of life and God evolve to look more like His, and faith underpins our "walk by the Spirit", which is perpetual dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit.
12. By growing our faith, we advance toward maturity, which is our goal. But growth has a price...a cross we must bear.
13. An unavoidable aspect of growth is *training*. This is seen in Scripture as tests and trials, or—put simply—as pressures and suffering. Believers often ask why things seem to keep happening to them, even when they have been seeking God and doing all the right things. If they are "doing right", why does suffering still come? This is the answer: God is testing them to advance their faith and promote their growth.
14. By learning the Word and enduring God's training, we move toward the completion, or "perfection", of our faith. This requires enormous commitment to God's program, because—as much trouble as I had accepting this at first—the road to maturity is painful and difficult.

15. If we grow enough, we can actually reach super-maturity.
16. As super-mature believers, we can understand God and His love, and fully comprehend and implement His grace methods. This will give us the “fullness of God”, and prepare us for the final step in our spiritual growth.
17. Ultimately, super-mature believers can *surrender* to God, thus reaching the highest level of spiritual functioning and communion with God. This is the ultimate Christian life!
18. Victory over sin occurs when we surrender, because God puts Satan back on his heels, and permits us to live without his unrestrained evil influence.
19. Contentment, which is the “blessing” aspect of surrender, fills our lives as we live in a state of yieldedness to God’s will. This is the Promised Land, the land of milk and honey, where God’s promises are fulfilled and our lives consist of godly joy and happiness.
20. Service to God and His children is maximized when we surrender, resulting in great fruit and the accumulation of rewards in heaven.

This is the Christian life, with its struggles and victories. For details and scriptures on the steps and/or components of this life, see the following books:

Bible Basics for Living: Essential Foundations (This is a comprehensive, step-by-step course, providing essential knowledge for Christian living.)

God’s Training Program for Believers: Preparation for Living

Step by Step toward Surrender: Getting the Fullness of God

Killing Sin before Sin Kills You: A Survival Guide

Entering the Promised Land: Contentment at Last