

"Christ Living in You"

Many people wear crosses around their necks, but does that make them Christians? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're exploring what it means to have Christ in you.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. While the world has many pictures of what they think Christ is like, the Scriptures provide for us the true picture of Jesus Christ and the true picture of God the Father. We don't want to be deceived by popular ideas that hold little resemblance to true Christianity; we look at what the Scriptures say. So, thanks for taking time with us today. We'd love to hear from you and we want to be a part of your life each week.

After Peter and John healed the man born lame at the Gate called Beautiful in the temple, the Council called them in and asked "By what power or by what name did you do this?" And they responded they had healed this lame man by the name of Jesus of Nazareth. "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4 verse 12). Then verse 13 says, "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus."

Can people see Jesus in you? Can they see Jesus in how you think, how you speak, how you treat others, and how you behave? Can people see that you have spent your life with Jesus Christ as your Lord? The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 16, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Ephesians 5:8 to 10 tells us to "walk as children of Light (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."

Now this is an important study on Christ living in you, and we offer it free! If you'd like a printed copy and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org and on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from John 17:20 to 23, and explore what it means to have Christ living in us.

Our reading today comes from the gospel according to John, chapter 17, verses 20 to 23. And these are verses where Jesus is praying to the Father, and on His heart are the people who follow Him. "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."

This is a reading from God's holy word.

Let's pray together. "Heavenly Father help us to always have Your love deep in our hearts, to love others, and to love the truth. And Father we pray that You will be us each day, that we may do Your will. In Jesus name we pray, Amen."

The Lord Jesus was totally given to fulfilling the will of His Father in heaven. More than once Jesus stated that He could do nothing on His own initiative. He didn't seek His own will but did seek the will

of the Father who sent Him. Jesus said in John 5:19, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner." Christ did not act on His own authority but spoke only those things the Father told Him to speak. His likeness to the Father in heaven gave proof that He was indeed the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus was determined both at Gethsemane and on the cross to fulfill the will of the Father. When you consider Jesus passed through the heavens and created the world (Colossians 1:15 and Hebrews 4:14), it's both astonishing and heart-touching to consider what Jesus did out of love for the Father and love for us. His love and humility should lead us to show our love and humility too.

Philippians 2:5 to 8 says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Jesus humbled Himself and obeyed what the Father sent Him to do. Christ lived for serving the Father, not Himself! Christ was not selfish, and Christians must not be selfish either.

If we wish to see what a Christian is, then we must investigate Scripture. Many passages describe the Lord Jesus and what it means to walk with Christ. If we belong to Jesus Christ, we must separate ourselves from the ways of the world. Paul contrasts unbelieving Gentiles with believers in Ephesians 4. He encouraged fellow Christians to see this difference. And he described the unbelievers in Ephesians 4:17 to 19, he said, "So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that's in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness."

One can clearly see the worldly ways of these unbelievers. By inspiration Paul describes them as futile, darkened, excluded, ignorant, hard-hearted, callous, sensual, impure and greedy. Now these are evil people who do not know God and have no desire to know Him or follow Him. But according to Ephesians 2 and verse 12, they have no hope in Christ, none. Now this is quite different from people who have learned the truth and follow Jesus.

Paul explains the difference in Ephesians 4:20 to 24, he said "But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, that you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which is in the likeness of God, and it's been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." When they learned about Christ, they learned about the truth. They left their former lives, which was corrupted by the lusts of deceit. And they're renewed in the spirit of their minds, they became new people, who like God walk in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

When we belong to Christ and walk with the Lord, people ought to be able to see Jesus in our lives. Ephesians chapter four describe this lifestyle. First, Ephesians 4:25 says, "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another." Now it matters whether the world sees us as genuine and authentic. If our actions differ from our words, then the world will see us as hypocrites. If we tell half-truths and outright lies, God will see us as liars. Revelations 21:8 says clearly that liars will have no part in the heavenly city.

Second, Paul speaks of how we deal with anger. Ephesians 4:26 and 27 says, “Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity.” Now we all find life frustrating at times, but we must never let our feelings control our actions. James 1:19 to 20 says, “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.” Many people assume following our feelings is always the right thing to do, but it’s never right to follow your feelings into sin. Anger leads people away from God rather than to fulfill the righteousness of God.

Romans 12, verses 17 to 21 says, “Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. ‘But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.’” You see there’s a better way than getting even and taking revenge on others. And so let’s learn to leave room for the wrath of God.

Third, we must earn our living and share with others. Ephesians 4:28 says that, “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need.” God wants His people to give a fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage. The Lord’s people should be generous people who share with others what God has provided for them. Galatians 6:9 and 10 says, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we don’t grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”

Fourth, we need to pay attention to how our speech goes. Ephesians 4:29 says, “Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.” The Lord Jesus made it clear in Matthew 12:36 and 37, “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you’ll be justified, and by your words you’ll be condemned.” We must learn not to complain, or to unfairly judge others, or to slander, or to gossip. We should be encouraging others, people whose language shows our love for God and respect for others is what we should be. Colossians 4 and verse 6 says, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”

Fifth, we need to remain free from sinful habits. Ephesians 4 and verse 30 urges us, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.” Yes, the Holy Spirit of God is a person and He grieves over sin. Romans 6:8 to 11 says, “Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Let’s remember Romans 8:12 to 13 says, “So then, brethren, we’re under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you’re living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you’re putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” The Spirit grieves when the children of God give in to sin and fail to live for the Lord.

Sixth, the Lord’s people should be known for their kindness and tender hearts. Ephesians 4:31 to 32 says, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.” Kindness and the willingness to forgive are important marks of being a Christian. How

we treat others is vital to how people in the world see the Lord's church. The Lord Jesus said in John 13:34 to 35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

There's a difference between those who walk in the ways of sinful men and those who walk in the ways of the Lord. 1 John 2:9 to 11 says that, "The one who says he's in the Light and yet hates his brother is in darkness until now. The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there's no cause for stumbling in him. But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he's going because the darkness has blinded his eyes." I fear many people are blinded by the darkness, giving into their feelings rather than walking in the ways of love and kindness. The Lord Jesus clearly says in Matthew 6:14 to 15, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Seventh, let the love of Jesus Christ live in you. Ephesians 5:1 to 2 says, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." The word "Christian," as it is used in the New Testament, is not an adjective but a noun and refers to a person who belongs to Christ. If we belong to Christ and we're crucified with Christ, then let's imitate the Lord Jesus. Let's walk in love and sacrifice ourselves to God as a fragrant aroma. Let's be God's children who live in holiness and righteousness. Let's love the truth and righteousness more than the ways of the world.

1 John 4:19 simply says that, "We love, because He first loved us." Our love should be more than words spoken; it should be in our hearts and in our lives. 1 John 3:16 says, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Verse 18 says, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth." Yes, let's let God's love shine out in our lives. Let's let it be something that is so powerful and so meaningful that other people will say "I wished I could love like that. I wish I cared the way that he cares, or she cares." The love of God needs to be deep in our lives.

Let's pray together. "Father we're thankful that You showed us Your love through sending Jesus Christ on the cross. We praise You, we praise Your name. And Father help us to glorify You, by living like Your son, and letting Him and His ways live in us. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen."

2 Corinthians 13:5 says, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" While we live in this world, we're not to live like the world lives. Romans 12 and verse 2 reminds us, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

You can hear the heart of the apostle Paul reach out to the church at Thessalonica in 2 Thessalonians 1:11 to 12, he wrote "To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ."

If you wish to glorify the Lord Jesus and follow Him, then you must come to Him for salvation from sin. Place your faith in Jesus Christ and in His word. Without faith, it's impossible to please God. Repent of your sins, flee from them, and pursue righteousness. Confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be

baptized into Christ. According to Romans 6:3 to 7 baptism is a burial and resurrection with Christ, it unites us with Him, it gives us newness of life, and it sets us free from sin. Christianity is a commitment for life; and the Lord expects us to be faithful unto death (Revelation 2 verse 10). Never stop serving the Lord!

We hope today's study about Christ living in you has stirred you to follow the Lord's way. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We do ask that you subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." And as you watch the programs be sure to like them, punch that little like button, and this helps us to spread the program so others can see it. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you to draw close to God.

Focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. I realize that some of you can no longer attend for health reasons, but many of you can. Everyone needs a church family. There's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about the program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.