

**CHRIST'S COMMANDS
TO
EVERY CHRISTIAN**

A FOUR-PART STUDY

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- 2. BELIEVE**
- 3. BE BORN AGAIN AND RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST**
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CHRIST'S COMMANDS TO EVERY CHRISTIAN

PART 1 OF 4

INTRODUCTION

Though the herald of Christ's coming begins in the Old Testament, with prophets foretelling the role our Savior would play in the life of mankind, in this study, we will take a close look at the commands of Christ during His earthly ministry, and their application from the moment of our confession to our journey's end and our final reward.

COMMAND #1 - REPENT

The first command of Christ is the command to **REPENT**.

Jesus begins His earthly ministry following His forty days in the wilderness with these words recorded in Matthew 4:17, "*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

Repentance does not appeal to our sin nature.

Yet, first step for every Christian is repentance.

No sinner can approach the throne of mercy without a repentant heart.

Repentance is twofold; the sinner must first **TURN FROM SIN**, and then **TURN TO GOD**.

In Luke 13:24, Jesus warns that though many will "*strive to enter in at the strait gate...many...shall not be able.*"

What will prevent them from receiving the gift of salvation?

It will be the lack of a repentant heart.

Read Luke 5: 32

Jesus refers to the righteous, and to sinners. Who are the righteous?

COMMAND #2 - BELIEVE

Repentance is conjoined with **BELIEF**.

What man would repent and accept Christ as his personal Savior if he did not first believe that Christ died to pay the death penalty for his sin nature?

In Mark 1:15, Jesus himself confirms the need to believe in His ability to save, when He says, *“Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.”*

Jesus is commanding His followers to believe His Gospel message that the promised kingdom of God is fulfilled through Him.

In John 14:1, Jesus emphasizes His direct role in the offer of salvation, when He commands us saying, *“Let not your heart be troubled; Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.”*

Belief in Christ’s power to save is the foundational *brick* on which all of Christianity is laid.

And finally, in John 6:29, Jesus commands us to believe in God Himself. *“This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.”*

Jesus directs every follower to the Father, whose covenant Christ is fulfilling.

Why is it important for every Christian to believe not only in Christ, but also in God who sent Him?

Overview: What three things does Jesus command us to believe in?

COMMAND #3 – BE BORN AGAIN AND RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus commands that we experience a complete transformation.

This concept was a mystery to the disciples, and is still a mystery to many who examine Christianity through carnal eyes.

In the Parable of the Fruit and the Tree (Matthew 12:33-35), we are taught to accept the allegorical fact that both the tree and the fruit are GOOD, or the tree and the fruit are evil.

In other words, evil cannot come from good.

This means that a conversion must take place in the sinner's heart if he is to produce good fruit.

This conversion takes place by the Spirit.

Jesus said to Nicodemus, *“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”* (John 3:7).

The idea of a Holy Spirit transformation is foreign to the carnal mind.

But this transformation is the only way to unite our sinful spirit with the Father.

John records in 20:22 that *“[Jesus] breathed on them and said unto them, ‘Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’”*

The Spirit of God not only transforms us, it comforts us and empowers us.

Question: What evidence is there of the indwelling of God’s Spirit in a Christian?

COMMAND #4 – FOLLOW JESUS

The command to **‘FOLLOW’** at first seems to be oversimplified.

How hard is it to follow Jesus?

Christians soon find out that it’s harder than they thought.

But if you have repented, and you believe in Christ as your Savior, and you have allowed the Spirit of God to take over your very being, then you have no choice but to follow Christ implicitly...totally...completely...unconditionally, and perfectly.

We are commanded by Christ to follow Him, and mirror Him.

Jesus said in John 12:26, *“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.”*

Leadership positions are attractive.

But when you become a follower, you become subservient and sacrificial.

Divide into groups and explain each of these commands of Jesus Christ.

Why is each a challenge that cannot be accomplished without the aid of the Holy Spirit?

Mark 12:30

Matthew 4:10

Luke 9:23

CHRIST'S COMMANDS TO EVERY CHRISTIAN

PART 2 OF 4

INTRODUCTION

Last week we began our study of the Commands of Christ.

The first four commands directly related to the Christian conversion experience.

The commands were **REPENT, BELIEVE, BE BORN AGAIN AND FOLLOW JESUS.**

This week we resume our study of the Commands of Christ with the next four commands – **PRAY, HAVE FAITH, STUDY THE SCRIPTURES, AND LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE.**

This begins the series of commands related to Christian growth and duty.

COMMAND #5 – PRAY

The Christian life is to be characterized by **PRAYER**, which means that our daily focus should be on communication with our Heavenly Father.

Christ considered prayer to be the central focus of the serious Christian.

He considered prayer so important that He said in Luke 21:36, ***“Watch ye therefore, and pray ALWAYS!”***

Always means without ceasing.

This means that God should be directing our thoughts and our feelings, and we should be focused on His desire to direct our path.

Taking our focus off God opens up the opportunity for Satan to distract us from our Christian walk.

Prayer is one of the weapons Christians are admonished to use against such attacks.

That's why Jesus said, *"Pray that ye enter not into temptation."*

Prayer is also a duty.

We pray for God's intervention in our personal circumstances, but we also offer intercessory prayer for others, for the spread of the Gospel (Luke 10:2), and for our enemies.

Look up Luke 6:28.

How important is it to pray for those who use or abuse you?

What result can you expect from such a prayer?

COMMAND #6 – HAVE FAITH

Having faith is not the same as believing.

It's one thing to boldly proclaim what God can do.

It is quite another to actually trust that God will do what He has promised.

Faith is a growth process that begins with baby steps.

Every step moves us closer to a more mature relationship with God.

Jesus left three commands to **'HAVE FAITH'**.

In Mark 11:22, He merely said, *"Have faith in God!"*

In John 20:27 He said, *"Be not faithless, but believing."*

In Matthew 14:27, He said, *"Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."*

All three of these commands encourage us to place our trust in the Godhead.

Faith is not a badge to be worn so much as it is a seed to be nurtured.

It is our faith experience that strengthens us.

The true convert has a changed will that desires to align itself with God's will.

It's not enough to expand your spiritual knowledge of things that promote good feelings toward God.

As Jesus pointed out, true love for God means living according to His will. (John 14:15, 21, 23-24).

What can you do to strengthen your faith?

COMMAND #7 – STUDY THE SCRIPTURES

Do you sometimes become frustrated when you read the Scriptures and do not understand their meaning?

Just as our biological lives unfold slowly, so do our spiritual lives.

God offers us what we can understand, as soon as we can handle it.

Just as a parent would consider explicit lessons on sexuality to be premature for preschoolers, God holds back certain lessons until we are mature enough to handle them.

Jesus told His disciples that the Spirit would come later and lead them into truths that they could not yet handle (John 16:12-16).

It is not a realistic quest to understand the Bible from beginning to end.

It is, however, realistic to expect that we can learn something from the Scriptures every day, and apply it to our lives.

Discuss why many Christians do not study the Bible.

What can YOU do to grow your understanding of the Bible?

COMMAND #8 – LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

We love to sing the song... *“This little light of mine...”*

But Christ’s command to **SHINE** is more than just the inspiration for a popular hymn.

When Jesus said, *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works...”*, He was commanding us to live holy.

We should take extreme caution in how we represent God to the world, because we are the representatives of His character.

He is our Father.

He has chosen us as His own.

Therefore, we should be like Him...holy and without blame before Him (Ephesians 1:4).

Godliness is a matter of character as well as conduct.

Jesus commands that Christians *“should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”*

Christ reminds us in this command that our representation of Him will outlast us.

Will we be remembered as someone lived what he preached?

Right conduct builds right character.

The sermon you **LIVE** offers moral and spiritual direction to the unsaved.

The Lord is searching for Christians of character and ability who will step into their role as *lights before men*.

Whatever your sphere of influence – at your job, in your home, at church, or in the community – Jesus commands you to accept the challenge to stand for God’s ways and encourage others to do the same.

Question: When we misrepresent Christ, how does our disobedience affect those around us?

CHRIST'S COMMANDS TO EVERY CHRISTIAN

PART 3 OF 4

INTRODUCTION

In this third week, we continue our study of Christ's commands for Christian growth and duty.

By now, we clearly see that there is far more to becoming a Christian than just marching down the aisle and joining the church.

Salvation is a transformative experience that replaces your old self with a new and improved you...if you **SUBMIT** to the change.

COMMAND #9 – OBEY AUTHORITY

Jesus made only one clear command regarding authority.

Mark 12:17 says, *“Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s...”*

As the Roman ruler during Christ's earthly ministry, Caesar did not have a reputation for fairness.

He was a ruthless soldier, now appointed as the head of the Senate at Rome.

The Jews despised him for his unfair taxation, among other things, and they were waiting for their Messiah to liberate them from his dictatorship.

Consequently, it must have sounded strange to Jesus' followers when He commanded them to give Caesar what was owed him.

Authority is a trust on behalf of others.

If you are the one in authority, you should weigh carefully and frequently your responsibility to those who depend on you.

Authority is as much a privilege as it is a right.

You may enjoy its perks, but you also need to fulfill the obligations and honor the trust that others have placed in you.

So what do you do when that trust has been violated?

In our lifetime, we will find ourselves ruled by good and bad leadership.

The challenge before us is to discern the difference, and adhere to all laws as long as they do not conflict with God's laws.

That's the advice that Jesus gives us.

He did not instruct us to rebel and overthrow our poor leaders, but to honor the office rather than the officer.

Only when the authority over us attempts to **FORCE** us to commit sin, do we have God's permission to rebel.

Question: How do those in positions of authority over us affect us?

COMMAND #10 – LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

Jesus had more to say on the subject of how we treat each other than on any other, and He gave us multiple commands concerning our relationship with our neighbor and our brother.

The most well known of these commands is *“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”* (Matthew 22:39).

Your neighbor is anyone in need.

Jesus Christ taught that as Christians, we ought to put the needs of others ahead of our own.

Wherever Scripture raises the issue of our relationship to each other, it challenges us to share at least some of our material wealth with people in desperate need.

This is the only Christ-like response there is.

Your neighbor is also anyone who despises you, or rejects your Christian faith.

In Luke 6:31, Jesus says, *“As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”*

This command is part of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount as recorded by Luke.

Matthew records Christ’s words as, *“Do good to them that hate you”* (Matthew 5:44).

While Jesus tells us to love our enemies, He also gives us specific instruction on how to treat our fellow Christians.

- *“...love one another, as I have loved you”* (John 15:12)
- *“Despise not one of these little ones”* (Matthew 18:10 - children)
- *“...first be reconciled to thy brother”* (Matthew 5:24)
- *“...and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day...forgive him.”*
 - (Luke 17:4)
- *“Judge not...condemn not...forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.”* (Luke 6:37)

Each of these commands is dripping with the same compassion and forgiveness that Christ exemplified on Calvary.

Question: With which do you struggle more: loving non-Christian enemies, or forgiving fellow Christians? Why?

COMMAND #11 – REJECT COVETOUSNESS

“COVETOUSNESS” is a big word that describes someone who is **“GREEDY”**.

Materialism is one of the greatest sins of our day.

Jesus never condemned people for being rich, nor do the Scriptures condemn the accumulation of money and possessions.

But Jesus warned us about what He called *“the deceitfulness of riches”* (Mark 4:19).

He understood the powerful attraction of money as a substitute for God.

God offers eternal life freely and graciously to those who follow Him (Mark 10:29-30).

However, that’s especially hard for the rich.

They have a competing offer, and its very attractive!

Jesus gave us some strong advice concerning covetousness.

In Luke 12:15 He said, *“Take heed, and beware of covetousness!”*

That’s some strong advice.

But Jesus didn't stop there.

In Matthew 5:42, Jesus commands us to share our wealth willingly and freely.

And In Matthew 6:19, He warns of the sin of materialism.

Question: How does wealth change a person's life?

Can a Christian be wealthy and still serve God?

COMMAND #12 – AVOID HYPOCRISY

Have you ever heard someone say that the church is full of hypocrites?

That's what happens when Christians practice bad religion – religion that benefits no one and offends God.

It's easy to point the finger at others and criticize or ridicule their religious practices and spiritual life, but what about your own patterns of faith?

How do they measure up to the Lord's description of true religion?

The Jews in biblical times had the worst role models in the Scribes and Pharisees.

Their outward appearance of righteousness masked their inner unrighteousness.

Jesus condemned these legalists for their distortion of the Covenant.

Jesus said, *"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy"* (Luke 12:1).

He also commanded us saying, *"Do not ye after their works"* (Matthew 23:2,3).

Christians are God's role models.

We set an example, be it good or bad.

God is well aware that people tend to follow leaders not on the basis of what they say, but on what they do.

God wants us to take seriously the privilege of representing Christ in our community and our workplace.

Question: Consider the Christian role models who led you to Christ. What drew you to them, and caused you to desire a life in Christ?

COMMAND #13 – LIVE HUMBLY

Just what is **"HUMILITY"**?

Paul calls it **"LOWLINESS OF MIND"** (Philippians 2:3).

Who would want that?

In biblical times, lowly people were slaves and servants.

The Philippians had the same desires we have. They wanted fame and fortune.

Biblical humility is not thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think (Romans 12:3), but instead acknowledging who you really are, with all of your strengths and weaknesses, your pluses and minuses, your successes and your failures.

Real humility means that you will not hesitate to tell people about your good qualities, while admitting your shortcomings.

Jesus said, ***“Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart”*** (Matthew 11:29).

True meekness or humility comes from seeing yourself in relation to God, as His servants.

That’s why Jesus said, ***“And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all”*** (Mark 10:44).

If you’re working for the Lord with the attitude that you won’t let the “left hand know what the right hand is doing”, you’re that humble servant Jesus is looking for.

Your service is your THANK YOU to Jesus for all He has already done for you!

We are Christ’s humble servants; we secretly serve a Risen Savior.

We have no light of our own.

The only light we carry is the Light of the World...Jesus.

Question: What secret services have you performed for Christ without seeking recognition?
