

1. Christianity Is Christ, & Jesus Christ Is God!

Be absolutely immovable about these truths:

1. Justification by faith alone (adding works to faith (legalism) ~ stroke that paralyzes you)
2. Authority and inerrancy of the Scripture (saying Scripture has errors ~ strep because it spreads germs when you open your mouth to speak)
3. Deity of Jesus Christ (negating the Deity of Christ is ~ meningitis that attacks the protective covering of the brain, of our mind)

Who is Jesus Christ? He is God in human flesh!

Parallel passages: John 1:1-18; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-6; Colossians 1:15-19

Jesus Christ's relationship to God

- Jesus is the representation and exact likeness of God. (v. 15)
- All God's fullness (His totality) dwells permanently in Jesus. (v. 19)

Jesus Christ's relationship to the Creation

- Jesus is the firstborn (priority and superiority) over all creation. (v. 15)
- Jesus created everything in the entire universe as planned by God the Father. (v. 16)
- Jesus is the controlling and unifying force in all of nature. (v. 17)
- As Creator, He has total right over our lives and has a right to set the rules (and thus tell us what is right and wrong).

Jesus Christ's relationship to the Church

- Jesus created the Church by combining Jews and Gentiles into one body of believers and appointed Himself Head. (v. 18, Ephesians 2:15)
- Jesus received a new body. (v. 18, 1 Corinthians 15:20)
- Jesus reconciled us to God through His physical death on the Cross. (vv. 20-22)
- So that in everything He might have supremacy. (v. 18)

Jesus Christ is **above** all powers and authorities, **in** all believers, & is **all** we need for earth & heaven!!

2. Grace-Covered Sin at the Cross

God is in the business of making ugly “beautiful.”



Messianic Psalms

These are considered to be Messianic Psalms: 2, 8, 16, 22, 23, 24, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 72, 89, 102, 110, 118.

Agony of Feeling Forsaken

“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

Crucifixion and Psalm 22

Agony & Disgrace

Crucifixion as God’s Plan

- Why Did Jesus Have to Die?
Romans 5:12 — After Adam and Eve sinned, two kinds of death entered the world:
 - 1) Spiritual death for man
 - 2) Physical death for man and for animals
- Why the Cross?
Acts 2:23
1 Corinthians 1:23-24

Crucifixion and Christ’s life in me

Because of His resurrection, from the moment we trust in Jesus, we get eternal spiritual life now and the promise of eternal physical life when Christ returns.

- Colossians 2:13-14
- Hebrews 2:14-15

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

What ugliness in your life has God made beautiful because of Jesus Christ living in you?

3. Spiritual Blessings In Christ, Part 1

Ephesians 1:3-8

Our Spiritual Blessing Package IN CHRIST

- Who you are in is a reference to your family relationship, origin, inheritance, nature and destiny. The moment you believed in Christ, God plucked you out of the mainstream of sinners and placed you in Christ—100%. In that place, we immediately receive a blessings package from His goodness that encompasses everything we need to live a life of faith and godliness. (Ephesians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:3)
- These blessings are associated with the heavenly realms—the unseen world of spiritual reality, a dimension we do not see. Anytime you ask God to heal someone, work in someone's life you are thinking about this unseen world. (John 3; 2 Kings 2:11; 6:8-17; Daniel 9:21-23; 10:12-14; Matthew 26:53)
- When Christ was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven, he was exalted over all the powers there. (Ephesians 1:20-22) We as believers, all of us (the Church), join Christ there. (Ephesians 2:6; 3:10)

Blessing: Chosen to Be Holy and Blameless (v. 4)

What can it mean?

It is very clear that God had a plan from the beginning for all believers to be in Christ (v. 3). God is Sovereign, but His sovereignty is always wise, holy, good and loving. His plan would be also. God desires all men to believe (1 Timothy 2:4) and the gospel to be preached to all men (Matthew 28:18-20). God doesn't communicate how He chooses men. But, He speaks volumes through His Word about the fact that when we believe in Christ we are from then on called chosen and elect.

What can it not mean?

- It cannot mean that God doesn't love some people. (John 3:16)
- It cannot mean that having doubts about your faith means you have not been chosen. If you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and trust in Him alone for salvation, you are saved and you are, therefore, chosen because your identity is in Him, not in yourself.
- It cannot mean that you can't tell someone that (1) God loves her or (2) Jesus died for her because she may or may not be "chosen."

For what are we chosen?

For God to make us holy and blameless.

Blessing: Predestined to Be adopted as Sons and Heirs (v. 5)

What can it mean?

God had a plan; He determined or decided something beforehand. Jesus' crucifixion was part of God's plan (Acts 4:28). Believers being conformed to the likeness of Jesus is part of God's plan (Romans 8:29). Here in

Ephesians 1:5, God predetermined our adoption as sons & daughters that we might receive all the privileges of the natural son (Jesus), including inheritance rights.

What can it not mean?

It cannot mean that you are a puppet with no control over your "destiny." God's rules are clear. Individuals choose to be for Him or against Him. Based upon one's choice, the result is either all spiritual blessings and heaven or nothing and hell.

Blessing: Lavished with His Grace (v. 6 & 8)

Grace is what God does to make men and women acceptable to Him. Mankind cannot earn such favor, does not deserve such favor, and will never merit such favor. It is summed up in the name, person, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man receives this favor or acceptance from God as a free gift through faith.

Blessing: Redemption (v. 7)

Jesus Christ has paid a full ransom price for the whole world (2 Peter 2:1) by His blood to purchase us out of slavery to sin and release us into freedom. We accept this payment of ransom by faith and are from then on a possession of God and secure in freedom from the slave master, sin, and its hold of guilt on us.

Redeemed persons respond by believing in the good news, resting in the good news, and rejoicing in the good news, while giving thanks to our Redeemer! (Hebrews 13:15)

- Present oneself to God to live for His glory (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
- Willingly serve God and one another wholeheartedly.
- Spread the good news to others who are still slaves and don't yet know their ransom has already been paid.

4. Spiritual Blessings In Christ, Part 2

Ephesians 1:3-14

God gives us every spiritual blessing **in Christ** the moment we are saved by faith. Some of the many blessings we receive as part of our “package deal” are:

- Chosen to be holy and blameless
- Predestined to be adopted as sons
- Lavished with His grace
- Redemption

Blessing: Forgiveness of Sins (v. 7)

Man is guilty before a holy God (Romans 3:10-12, 23). God's answer to guilt is forgiveness. Man's guilt has been imputed (placed) on a substitute (Jesus Christ) and taken away. The cross demonstrates God's justice (Romans 3:25-26) because sin was paid for, and His love at the same time (Romans 5:8) because He Himself provided a substitute.

The sin is taken away, not just covered temporarily like happened in those OT sacrifices. (Colossians 2:13-14; John 1:29) This is an act of God's grace lavished upon us.

Blessing: Revelation (v. 9)

Just knowing about God's grace, redemption paid, and forgiveness offered is a blessing for us. And, we also know His future plan when He will bring all things in heaven and on earth together under the headship of Christ. What God planned for in the past, enabled in the present through Christ and the cross, will be put into effect universally in the future.

Blessing: Signed, Sealed and Delivered by the Holy Spirit (v. 13-14)

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity, co-equal with God the Father and God the Son. He is a person, not a force, referred to with personal pronouns.

What is His role?

To the general population of mankind, His role is to 1) place the truth about Christ in a clear light before someone so that it must be seen and acknowledged as truth, 2) convict them of their being in a state of sin, 3) reveal that Jesus is the righteous Savior who can save them from that sin, and 4) remind them of judgment should they refuse to receive that Savior. (John 16:7-11)

His job is also to glorify Jesus Christ, especially through believers. (John 16:14)

What is His Purpose in the Believer's Life?

- To regenerate the believer—to give new spiritual life the moment someone believes in Christ, moving her from being in Adam to being in Christ.
- To baptize the believer into the Body of Christ and adopting her into the family of God.
- To indwell the believer, imparting the life of Christ. (Galatians 2:20)

- To mark the believer with the seal of God's ownership. (Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Corinthians 1:22)

What does Paul mean by "marked with a seal?"

It carries with it the idea of (1) ownership, (2) identification, (3) security, (4) permanence, and (5) completeness.

- God marks His people as His own through the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. His seal means we are wanted, valuable and important.
- Being sealed gives us continued assurance that we are God's children and will receive all the inheritance promised to His children—heaven, new bodies, reigning with Christ in His kingdom. There is no power greater than God who could break the seal, including yourself.
- Sealing also communicates that the contents are prepared and complete.
- Sealing takes place the moment you believe in Christ for salvation. All believers. No exception is given. It is immediate and permanent. God the Father does the sealing; the Holy Spirit is the seal. Nowhere are we exhorted to ask for it so it must be universal and immediate.

What are the results of being sealed?

- We are guaranteed all that God has promised for our future.
- God's deposit of the Holy Spirit in believers' lives is the first payment of all the treasures that will be theirs. God will keep all His promises (guaranteeing our inheritance).
- The Holy Spirit being present within us assures us that we are His, that He won't forget about us when He comes, that we go to be with Him when we die, that our sins will never again count against us, that we are new creatures, that...
- The Holy Spirit transforms the believer's life, undeniably marking God's presence and God's ownership in that life—forever.

Our Spiritual Blessing Package IN CHRIST

Your position "in Christ" is your...

- Acceptance before God
- Assurance of salvation
- Identity

Christ's presence "in you" is...

- Life
- Power for living
- The basis of a relationship

These are your spiritual blessings **in Christ** to be enjoyed now, meeting the deepest needs of humanity. These have nothing to do with your finances, your health, or your earthly family status. Praise God for them!

5. Resurrection, Regeneration & New Life

The Resurrection and the Scriptures

What the resurrection did not mean—

- A proof of life after death.
- The appearance of Jesus' spirit or ghost.
- Direct proof that Jesus is God.

What the resurrection did mean—

1. Announced the beginning of the KINGDOM
 - Daniel 12:2-3; Isaiah 26:19 (John 5:28-29)
 - Hosea 6:1-2 (John 2:19-21; Mt 16:21)
 - Psalms 16:10-11 (Acts 2:24-31)
 - Deuteronomy 18:15 (Acts 3:19-22)
 - Psalm 110:1 (Acts 2:31-36)
2. Provided God's solution to man's state of spiritual death—REGENERATION

The Resurrection and the Body

- Jesus' new body was the same, but slightly different.
- Jesus ascended in His body to reign from heaven as God-man UNTIL he returns. (Ac 1:9-11)

The Resurrection and the Kingdom

New Life created with a new purpose in the UNTIL time

New hope for "life after death" during the UNTIL time

- Immediately be with Jesus. (Luke 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8-9; John 17:24)
- In God's hand (Acts 7:59-60), and supremely happy. (Revelation 14:13).
- In a prepared place, receiving comfort & recognizable. (John 14:2-3; Luke 16:19-31; Revelation 6:9-11)
- Active enjoyment of our new life. (Psalms 16:11; John 17:24; Romans 8:18)
- We may know time and happenings on earth. (Luke 9:30-31)
- Our babies and small children will be there. (Matthew 19:13-14; 2 Samuel 12:19-23)

New assurance for resurrected life after the UNTIL time

- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17
- 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

6. Grace-Created Identity — Know Who You Are

“How we see ourselves directs how we live our faith walk.”

You’ve got to know your identity *Rom 5:19-6:2*

Believers get a new life with a **radical** new identity and are set free to live a radically new kind of life. You are not who you used to be. (*2 Cor. 5:14-17*)

Not knowing your identity enslaves you

Being enslaved to illiteracy of the Bible and poor teaching...results in having no idea what your new identity is and all the benefits that come with it.

Knowing your identity sets you free *Rom. 6:3-5*

From God’s point of view, there are two kinds of people in the world—those “in Adam” and those “in Christ”. Who you are “in” determines your identity and your options for living.

World’s Lies

- You are still a sinner because you sometimes sin.
- You get your identity from what you have done.
- You get your identity from what people say about you.
- Your behavior tells you what to believe about yourself.

God’s Truth

- You are a saint who sometimes sins.
- You get your identity from what God has done for you.
- You get your identity from what God says about you.
- Your belief about yourself directs your behavior.

Romans 5:19-6:5 (NIV)

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, **21** so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? **2** By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? **3** Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

5 If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

As a believer in Jesus Christ, you can assuredly say,

“I am in Christ, a child of God and one of God’s saints, totally accepted and loved by Him.”

7. Law & Grace — Balance Liberty with Love

“In essentials, Unity, in non-essentials, Liberty, in all things, Love”

The book of Romans clearly teaches that Christians are free from bondage to the Jewish Law given by God through Moses, which governed the daily life of every Israelite. Christ brings liberty. But, with liberty comes responsibility. Romans 14 reveals that to enjoy our liberty without offending one another within a love-bonded community, we must **balance liberty with love**.

Is it a moral issue?

ABSOLUTES are truths essential to the Christian faith, never change and are true for every believer, in every nation, during every time period of history.

- Absolute doctrines are those defining true Christianity.
- Absolute behaviors are those specifically revealed in the scriptures as right or wrong as we seek to love God and glorify Him.

NON-ABSOLUTES are not essential to the Christian faith. They can change over time and can be different in every culture and every time period.

- Jesus may give us a PERSONAL CONVICTION about something that is right or wrong for us individually. They can change over time as we grow in our faith.
- PREFERENCES are issues on which you have a personal liking, but aren't right or wrong for anyone.

Is it stunting someone's spiritual growth?

- 1 Corinthians 10:23—Principle #1: I may have the complete freedom to do something myself, but it may not be beneficial to me or to those around me. Jesus and me need to determine that.
- 1 Corinthians 8:10—Principle #2: There is a distinction between public and private use of liberty. When your brother or sister “sees you” and is distressed by what you are doing, that's a signal that you need to talk to Jesus about whether or not to do that activity.

Is it disrupting unity within the Body of Christ?

For every issue:

- What are the facts?
- Is this a moral issue? If yes, what scriptures address it?
- How should I respond?

Talk to Jesus about any issue that you don't know how to handle. If it's a moral issue, Jesus will not only show you where in His Word to find the answer. He'll also give you the strength to stand firm on His truth. If it's a non-absolute, He'll let you know within your heart whether it's right or wrong for you. If He doesn't give you a personal conviction about it, you can follow your preferences and enjoy your liberty. Whenever any other person is distressed by your freedom, **balance your liberty with love**.

8. Grace-Centered Living in the Power

We can live successfully in the power already available to us through God's Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God's Empowering Presence — Ephesians 3:16, 20

- Your position *in Christ* is — Assurance of salvation, Identity, and Acceptance before God.
- Christ's presence *in you* is — Life, The Basis of Relationship, Power for living today.

Live in the Power for Daily Life, Relationships, & Battles — Ephesians 4, 5, & 6

	Living by the Spirit	Living by the Flesh	Response
DEFINITIONS	Submitting to and depending on God's Spirit as we daily live out the life of Christ within us—always leads to God's way of approaching life.	Submitting to the flesh (body, mind, emotions, will)—that is not born again, gets help from the world influenced by Satan, and does not become godly over time—always leads away from God's way of approaching life to your own way or the world's way.	View yourself rightly through your identity in Christ.
BEHAVIOR	Ephesians 4:1-3; 32; 5:1-2; 20	Ephesians 4:17-19; 31; 5:18	Agree with God (confession) that you are guilty of that behavior. You are already forgiven. Choose obedience and decide you want to live by the Spirit's power in that area of your life (repentance).
WORDS	Ephesians 4:29	Ephesians 5:4	Depend on the Spirit's power by saying, "Lord Jesus, I can't do this, but you can do this in my life. I trust your Spirit to do this in me." Daily depend.
SPIRITUAL BATTLES	Ephesians 6:10-12; 16; 3:10-11	Giving in to substitutes that "seem to work"	Watch what He does!

You know you are living by the Spirit when you step out in obedience to God's Word, depend on God's Spirit for the ability and power to do what He asks you to do, and trust God with the results.

9. Grace-Motivated Obedience — Know Whom You Are Serving

“Set free from sin’s power because a greater power has moved in.”

My Relationship to Sin

Sin’s power is broken by Jesus’ transforming power.

Sin no longer makes me guilty before God, separated from Him

- **Confession** is agreeing with God what you and He both know to be true.
- **Repentance** is changing your mind about that sin, mourning its ugliness.
- **Dependence** is relying on the transforming power of Jesus inside for that change to take place.
- **Forgiveness** is God’s continual removal of sin from our account with Him.

My Daily Choice How to Serve Jesus as His Woman

Option 1: *Actively serve my new master Jesus*

- Step 1: View yourself rightly. “I am a child of God who sometimes _____.”
- Step 2: Agree with God that _____ is sin and doesn’t fit one who is serving Him.
- Step 3: Desire not to _____ any longer. “Lord Jesus, please nudge me when I am _____. When He does, agree with Him.
- Step 4: Depend on Jesus’ power in you to replace your _____ with something better. “Okay, Lord, by faith, I am going to let you do that in my life.”

Option 2: *Be passive to my new master; say “yes” to the old master sin.*

Romans 6:6-14 (NIV)

6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — **7** because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

8 Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. **10** The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. **13** Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. **14** For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Having been set free from the power of sin, you can choose to say,

“Lord Jesus, I am YOUR woman today, tomorrow, and the next day.”

10. Grace Transforms — Who Am I Becoming?

Dare to Be Different

Dare to Evaluate — Romans 12:2a

List your positive and negative character traits developed by your 20s.

- Which ones have been useful to God as you serve Him? Star* them.
- Which ones have been redirected or need to be changed by God? Put an arrow → next to them.

Positive Character Traits

Negative Character Traits

Dare to Submit — Romans 12:1

1. Recognize that all of you belongs to God anyway, and “Daring to Submit” to Him is for your good and pleases God.
2. Renew your mind from the world’s way of thinking & feeling & doing to God’s way of thinking & feeling & doing.

Dare to Expect Results — Romans 12:2b

*“As Paul persisted in preaching Jesus as the crucified Savior and sin-bearer, the unexpected happened: pagans as well as Jews and God-fearers believed the message and found their lives transformed by a new, liberating power which broke the stranglehold of selfishness and vice and purified them from within. **The message of Christ crucified had thus accomplished something which no body of Greek philosophic teaching could have done for them.**”*
(Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free, F. F. Bruce, page 25)

11. Become a Grace-Giver

As light-bearers to people living in darkness, lead them to seek the treasure in Jesus Christ that is more powerful, valuable, and effective than anything they have been substituting for Him.

Called Out of Darkness

The misery of those living in darkness — 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-12

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“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9)

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*Evangelism is not about you involving Him in your outreach efforts. It is Him involving you in His...Only the Holy Spirit can open the eyes of unbelievers to the truth of the gospel... It is the job of believers to **communicate** the gospel. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to convert the heart. (David Souther, EvanTell)*

Into His Wonderful Light

We are light-bearers; live as children of the light — Ephesians 5:8-9

Declare the Praises of Him Who Did This in Your Life

Communicate what He has done in your life — Romans 10:14; Revelation 12:11

Ideas to get you started:

- What did our creative God use to target your need and draw you closer to Him at some point in your life—even here?
- What is it like to be dearly loved by your Father God?
- Describe a great need that God has met in your life or a remarkable thing you.
- Share an area of your life where you have committed to saying: “Lord Jesus, I can’t do _____ on my own, but you can do _____ in my life. I trust your Spirit to do this in me.”