

## Now That You're A Christian

You're a member of a great company, or brotherhood. This company has been "called out" from the world to show God's love and mercy. You must now let your light shine before men, and live rightly and godly. You are to take your place worthily among this brotherhood and to promote its good. You must insure your own spiritual development, and in order to do this, you must study the Bible and understand its message (II Timothy 2:15).

You are a member of the Church of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27). You are one of those "living stones" which make up the church of which Peter writes (I Peter 2:5). Therefore, you must give of yourself to the Lord and his church (I Timothy 4:12-14; Matthew 16:24).

1. **A Constant Prayer Life** – To help keep the church strong, you yourself must be strong in faith, strong in the Lord (Ephesians 6:10). To begin to be strong, constant prayer is needed. Prayer keeps a Christian in touch with **Heaven**, thus being able to ask the Father to keep us strong. Paul tells us that we should pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17). We have evidence throughout the Bible of prayer and its power. James also gives us a look at the power of prayer and has this to say... "The Effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much".
2. **Attendance** – Now that you are a Christian, you must attend the services of the church gladly and receive inspiration and encouragement from the studying of God's word; from the communion in which you are reminded of the sacrifice that Christ made for you; and in the association with your fellow Christians. Failure to attend services is the beginning of the downfall of the Christian. Why **MUST** you attend **ALL** services of the Church? Because:
  1. **It's a SIN to miss the Assembly.** The Bible says, "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). The first Christians met weekly and often daily (Acts 20:7; 2:45). Any service where the bible is taught, prayer is made, and God is worshipped, is good, and "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin (James 4:17). If it is good to be present for all services, then it is bad to be absent from any.
  2. **You go to all services to put first things first.** "Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 6:33). Jesus and the Church must be first to the Christian, even **BEFORE** parents (Matthew 10:37). Nothing could be so important as being a faithful member of the Lord's Church.
  3. **In Church, Jesus is there.** "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20). Jesus has never forsaken an assembly, and you should want to be with him.
  4. **You will be made Stronger in Church.** Power is given in worship to live a nobler life. There, one is fortified against falling away. There, is the sweetest fellowship on earth. There, Souls are made fit for heaven. There, strength is given to bear the burdens of life.

5. **Going to Church is safe.** All who forsake the assembly, sin. Dangerous risks are taken in forsaking ANY assembly of the Church; Christ may return in that hour, death may come, a life of neglect may begin, and others may be lost by a bad example.
  6. **Going to Church is abounding in the Lord's Work.** A true Christian wants to do ALL he can and not as LITTLE as he can. Even after doing all possible, still there is work to do. "Finally, my brethren, be ye steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).
  7. **God want the Church to grow.** The Church always grows when members put God first by **loyal attendance.** Since the Church is saved, the growth of the Church means salvation of the Lost. Here is a way all can help in the finest work on earth.
  8. **To Go To All The Services is to set a good example.** Many are looking your way and following you. Influence is either good or bad; There is no middle ground. Any hour the Church meets, your influence is with or against Christ. If you attend, it is for the Lord. When you neglect service, it is for the Devil.
  9. **Going to Church Proves your Love and Gratitude.** The Love of the Church was so great that Christ gave his life for it. As a child of the King, you must also prove your love for the Church. One who loves God does not ask if he must attend all services. God's love should compel him to. So, you see, to miss the assembly is to miss the great deal. To miss church is to sin.
3. **Leadership** – The Church is under the oversight of the elders who are to see that no false doctrine is taught to the members and that no unauthorized practice be carried on in its worship. Where there are no elders the minister is the sole scriptural authority in the Church (Titus 2:15). You will be answerable to the leadership because they watch for your soul (Hebrews 13:17).
  4. **You and Your Money** – First of all, your money is not your money; it belongs to the Lord. Can you rightfully claim absolute ownership of it? Certainly Not! It has been given to you solely as a trust, to be used in ways which will please the divine Master. "Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). The Christian is held accountable for every cent of money God has placed in his care. He cannot fail to give liberally in support of the Lord's work and be faithful to this trust.
    1. **Giving is a necessity to the one who gives.** If your life is to be a selfish one, if you are always getting and never giving, you can have little blessing from the Lord. It is by giving that we receive. "Give and it shall be given unto you", said Jesus (Luke 6:38). When we have learned to open our hearts, we can be blessed (Malachi 3:10). The Lord has promised to care for the needs of those who serve Him. Listen to David, "I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread (Psalms 37:25). We may be blessed materially for giving, but greater are the blessings that are spiritual which can only be had in the Lord. "They that sow sparingly shall reap also sparingly" (II Corinthians 9:6). There can never be any great richness of spiritual blessing in a life that is too careful of its own interests. Even in material things one may be too closed fist to make any money, and this is true to an even greater extent in the spiritual realm (Proverbs 11:24-25).
    2. **Giving is also a necessity to the one who receives.** Christian giving is a necessity to the maintenance of the church building, and more importantly, the proclamation of the gospel. The Church not only exists to preach the gospel, but it also exists by preaching the gospel. The church that ceases to preach the gospel has ceased to fulfill its mission, and will, in most cases, die. The Lord's Plan, although to men it may seem foolish, is to save men by the preaching of the gospel (I Corinthians 1:21). If then, the church is to save men by the preaching of the gospel, men must be sent out by the church to preach, for "How shall they

preach, except they be sent?" (Romans 10:14-15). In Paul's estimation, the one who preaches the gospel has a right to live of the gospel (I Corinthians 2:7-14\*\*\*\*), which means that the church is under obligation to support its ministry in material necessities, while its ministry labors with them in spiritual things.

3. **How Must You Give?** [I Corinthians 16:1-2] According to the plan, giving should be regular, "upon the first day of the week." The New Testament Plan for the church and for the individual Christian in the church encourages regular habits of worship and service, such as regular attendance and observance of the Lord's Supper, praying and study of the word of God. This also includes the matter of regularity in our giving. Giving should also be personal, or individualistic – "Let every one of you". No one has the right to try to shift the responsibility of giving to some one else. This plan is also based upon sound economic principles and encourages the habit of saving or "laying by in store as God has prospered him". You must give as God has blessed you.
4. **Let us notice some facts.** Giving, or tithing, was done in the days of the Patriarchs. Abraham paid the tithe to Melchizadek (Genesis 14:17-20), and Jacob vowed to pay the tithe to the Lord (Genesis 28:20-22). The tithe became a part of the law given from Mt. Sinai (Leviticus 27:30), and was observed by the Hebrews throughout their history. It was still a part of their practices during the days of Christ (Matthew 23:23).
5. **The Christian should not give less, but more, than did God's people in any former dispensation.** Christians are living under a better covenant and enjoy better promises than those before enjoyed (Hebrews 8:6; 11:40). Jesus raised rather than lowered the standards of life for the Christian (Matthew 5:21, 22; 43-44). If he raised the standard here, are we not safe in concluding that Christ raised it also in the matter of giving? If the Jews should go beyond the tenth (Luke 11:42), how can we as Christians, living under the new covenant with all its blessings, promises and privileges, excuse ourselves and go even below his standard of giving? Your giving should be from the heart, not as compelled by law; "let each one as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give." The Lord loves a cheerful giver and will provide for his needs abundantly. "He will make all grace to abound" to the cheerful giver, "and he will have all sufficiency in all things." He will supply him with seed for sowing, bread for food and increase in the harvest. His is in harmony with the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 6:19-34). When we think of giving, let us remember what God gave for our redemption, the best thing that heaven had to offer, the only begotten son of the Father, Jesus Christ. If God could give his best, **WHAT ABOUT YOU?** What shall it be for you, fellow Christian: illiberality or liberality, grudging giving or willing giving, unhappy giving or cheerful giving? Will you choose to withhold of your money that which should be devoted to the Lord's service, to suffer the final consequence in the loss of your soul in everlasting perdition, or will you choose to deny yourself by giving to the Lord cheerfully and willingly of your money that which is **His** just due, combining faithful giving with faithful living, to enjoy for all eternity the bliss, peace, and rest of the heavenly home?
5. **The Work Of The Church** – The church is the only institution through which God may make known to the world his purpose for humanity. No congregation is really following the New Testament pattern unless it is interested in preaching in its own community and beyond as it has opportunity. For a church to be of the New Testament type it must be missionary minded; It must be actually doing evangelistic work, with its "home forces" in its own community and nearby communities, and in sending or helping to send men who will carry the "good news" of salvation to all the world. As a Christian you must be doing your part so that the local church, of which you are a member, Your Home Congregation, may grow and do its proper work. Not only the preacher, but every member

has his role to play in building the local church. Every Christian should be influencing all his associates in the right direction and trying to lead them to Christ. In the early days of the Church there was no special class of professional preachers. All members had the responsibility to share the gospel with others. The work of the church is, first of all to preach the gospel. While that is done, each member must be living a life of purity and godliness, helping his neighbors as he has opportunity in any way that he may be of help and that the whole body Christians, the church in a particular place, must be doing as a body many things which could not be accomplished by the members individually.

6. **Christian Living** – Now that you are a Christian, you must know how to conduct yourself in your various personal relationships and activities. In addition to your faith you must add: (1) **VIRTUE**, (2) You should always be striving for more bible **KNOWLEDGE**. (3) Develop **SELF-CONTROL**. (4) You must add **GODLINESS**. (5) Learn to be **PATIENT**. (6) **BROTHERLY KINDNESS** must be shown to all. (7) And, above all, a spirit of **LOVE**. Not all of these traits can be put on overnight; it will take a while to attain great improvement, but the Christian life is described as a race; a battle; as growth. You should be trying to grow day-by-day into the likeness of the **Master** until after some years all who know **YOU** may see the sincerity and reality of your Christianity. Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:18)

There are several passages in which specific sins are listed. These things are inherently sinful everywhere, in every age. Study these scriptures; [Galatians 5:19-21],[I Corinthians 5:11; 6:9], [Colossians 3:5-9], [II Timothy 3:1-5], [Revelation 22:15]. A careful study should be given these to see that you do not allow any of them to creep into your thinking and living. If you do not understand the meaning of any of these word you should take time to look them up in a dictionary so that you may know their meaning and avoid committing the sins they stand for. It is important to know that such things as lying, disobedience to parents, speaking evil and envying are among the things which will keep one out of the kingdom of heaven. Some things which are lightly passed over in our modern life cannot be tolerated in the life of a Christian. Let us hear God's word, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever (I John 2:15-17).