

The Significance Of Being A Christian



**What It Means To Be A Christian
According To The Scriptures**

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Note: This study is based upon a series entitled “**The Significance Of Being A Christian**”, by Gary Henry. The URL for his web site containing many excellent articles and sermon outlines is: <http://www.brasstacks.org>

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The outlines were developed in the course of my ministry as a preacher of the gospel. Feel free to use them as they are, or adapt them to suit your own personal style. To God be the glory!

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The Significance Of Being A Christian

A Person Reborn

INTRODUCTION

1. It is always exciting to see someone become a Christian...
 - a. Even when an observer doesn't understand all that is involved, they often sense something meaningful is going on
 - b. Especially as time goes on, and changes begin to occur in the person's life
2. But often the significance of becoming a Christian appears to be lost...
 - a. Sometimes even Christians fail to appreciate the significance of being a Christian
 - b. When this happens, Christians often fail to grow as they should
3. It never hurts for a Christian to reflect, and ask such questions as...
 - a. What did I do?
 - b. What have I received?
 - c. What are the implications and consequences of what I've done?
 - d. What has happened to me?
 - e. What have I become?
 - f. What is different about me?
4. To summarize these questions...
 - a. What is the meaning, importance, and value of becoming a Christian?
 - b. What am I now to do?

-- **Such are the questions we hope to answer in this series, "The Significance Of Being A Christian"**

[In this first lesson, we note that a Christian is "**A Person Reborn**". That is because in Christ one has become...]

I. A NEW CREATION

A. A CHRISTIAN IS A "NEW CREATION"...

1. A Christian rises out of the watery grave of baptism to newness of life - **Ro 6:4-5**
2. Old things have passed away, and new things have come - **2 Co 5:17**

B. A NEW CREATION MADE POSSIBLE BY VIRTUE OF A NEW BIRTH...

1. A new birth produced by responding to the Word of God - **Ja 1:18; 1 Pe 1:22-23**
2. A new birth produced by the working of the Spirit of God - **Jn 3:3-5; Ti 3:5-7**

C. THIS NEW CREATION EMBARKS ON A LIFE OF RENEWAL...

1. The inner man is to be renewed daily - **2 Co 4:16**
2. This renewal is ongoing, involving the renewal of one's mind - **Ro 12:2**

[Because of the new creation which has occurred, and the renewing which continues to take place, the Christian can be said to have...]

II. A NEW LIFE

A. HAVING PASSED FROM DEATH TO LIFE...

1. As Jesus promised to those who hear His words - **Jn 5:24-25**
2. Once dead in sin, we are now made alive to God - **Ep 2:1-5; Co 2:12-13**
3. We now have the promise and prospect of life eternal, given through God's Son - **1 Jn 5:11-13**

B. HAVING PASSED FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT...

1. Such is the objective of gospel preaching: to turn people from darkness to light
 - a. So Jesus told Paul - **Ac 26:18**
 - b. So Peter wrote to Christians - **1 Pe 2:9-10**
 2. Though we once walked in darkness, we can now walk in the light
 - a. As children of light - **Ep 5:8; 1 Th 5:5**
 - b. The metaphor of light representing goodness, righteousness, and truth - **Ep 5:9**
- **For which we should ever be thankful - cf. Co 1:12-13**

[What makes such a new creation and a new life a reality? It is more than a mere obedience to some new doctrine. It is possible only when such obedience is the result of...]

III. A NEW LOYALTY

A. A CHRISTIAN IS A "CONVERTED" PERSON...

1. As exemplified by the Thessalonians - **1 Th 1:9**
2. Conversion inherently involves change, particularly a change of loyalties
 - a. From serving sin to serving God - **Ro 6:16-18**
 - b. From serving idols to serving God - e.g., **1 Th 1:9**

B. A CHRISTIAN IS CONVERTED TO JESUS CHRIST...

1. He or she acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ - cf. **Ac 2:36; 1 Pe 3:15**
2. Above family, life, and self, the Christian chooses to follow Jesus - cf. **Mt 10:37-39**
3. When one makes that choice, Christ will become the focus of that person's life - **Ga 2:20**

C. SUCH LOYALTY TO CHRIST RESULTS IN A NEW LIFE...

1. In which God blesses the individual through Jesus Christ - e.g., **Ph 4:6-7**
2. In which one finds strength to live the new life - e.g., **Ph 4:13**

CONCLUSION

1. A significant thing about a Christian, then, is that he or she...
 - a. Experiences a new creation
 - b. Enjoys a new life

- c. Entertains a new loyalty
 - **Such a individual is truly “A Person Reborn”**
2. But not all professing Christians show evidence of this rebirth...why is that?
- a. They may have not yet truly experienced the new creation
 - 1) Obedience not rendered in faith will not produce the new birth - **Mk 16:16**
 - 2) For God’s power to be at work, we must submit in faith - **Co 2:12-13**
 - b. Though they may have been reborn and entered the new life, they may have gone back into sin
 - a. Hardened by sin’s deceitfulness, they have departed from God - cf. **He 3:12-13**
 - b. Entangled once again by the pollutions of the world - cf. **2 Pe 2:20**
- **In either case, their loyalty is certainly not where it ought to be!**

May the promise of a new creation and a new life in Christ remind us of **“The Significance Of Being A Christian”**, and challenge us to examine our loyalties if we do not see in our lives the evidence of **“A Person Reborn”**...

The Significance Of Being A Christian

Belonging To The Lord

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson, we began this series...
 - a. Asking what is the significance of being a Christian
 - b. Starting with the idea that a Christian is **“A Person Reborn”**
2. We noted that a Christian is a person reborn because in Christ...
 - a. They are a new creation - **2 Co 5:17**
 - b. They have been born again - **1 Pe 1:22-23**
 - c. They now have a new loyalty: to serve Jesus Christ - **Ga 2:20**
3. We begin this lesson by noting Paul’s comments to the Corinthians...
 - a. As recorded in **1 Co 6:19-20**
 - b. In which he challenged their thinking by asking **“Do you not know...you are not your own?”**
 - c. The Christian needs to understand that he has been **“bought at a price”** and consequently is a person **“Belonging To The Lord”**

[**“Belonging to the Lord”** has many connotations attached to it. One is that a Christian is...]

I. GOD’S SPECIAL PERSON

A. CHRISTIANS ARE NOW GOD’S OWN SPECIAL PEOPLE...

1. Note how Peter describes them in **1 Pe 2:9-10**
 - a. “a chosen generation”
 - b. “a royal priesthood”
 - c. “a holy nation”
 - d. “His own special people”
 2. These are terms that were once reserved for the physical nation of Israel
 - a. The Lord had chosen them - **Deu 10:15**
 - b. He made them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation - **Exo 19:5**
 - c. Thus they had become a special people above all other nations - **Deu 7:6**
- **What had once been limited to physical Israel, is now possible to all people who are in Christ, as promised to Abraham - cf. Ga 3:8-9,28-29**

B. A SPECIAL PEOPLE, WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITIES...

1. To proclaim the praises of God - **1 Pe 2:9-10**
 - a. Because He called us out of darkness into His marvelous light
 - b. Because He showed mercy, and made us the people of God
2. To grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ - **2 Pe 1:8-11**
 - a. To make our calling and election (as God’s people) sure
 - b. To have an abundance entrance into the everlasting kingdom

- **From the example of physical Israel, let us beware of becoming hardened and not lose faith, or we may not enter the heavenly rest that awaits us! - He 3:12-4:2,11**

[A Christian is truly “a special person” because he belongs to the Lord. He can rejoice in knowing that he is one of God’s “beloved” (Ro 1:7). God’s love for the Christian is made even more evident when we note that he is also...]

II. GOD’S CHILD

A. CHRISTIANS ARE BLESSED TO BE CHILDREN OF GOD...

1. In one sense, all people are God’s children - **Ac 17:26-29**
 2. In another sense, many do not have God as their Father - **Jn 8:42-44**
 3. Yet Christians are the children of God in a very special way
 - a. Because of their faith, and having put on Christ in baptism - **Ga 3:26-27**
 - b. Redeemed and adopted by God, they have received His Spirit into their hearts - **Ga 4:4-6**
 - c. Because we do the Father’s will, Jesus considers us His family - **Mt 12:48-50**
- **Christians should be touched by this expression of God’s love - 1 Jn 3:1-2**

B. AS GOD’S CHILDREN, WE HAVE BLESSINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES...

1. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ - **Ga 4:7; Ro 8:16-17**
 - a. For we are heirs according to the promise of God - **Ga 3:29**
 - b. It is an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, that does not fade, and is reserved for us in heaven - **1 Pe 1:4**
 2. As heirs, we have many responsibilities, including:
 - a. Being thankful for the inheritance we have - **Co 1:12**
 - b. Abstaining from the works of the flesh - **Ga 5:19-21**
 - c. Perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord - **2 Co 6:17-7:1**
- **If we wish to receive the promised blessings, we need to patiently carry out our responsibilities with an enduring faith - He 10:35-39**

[Besides being God’s special person and God’s child, a Christian who “belongs to the Lord” also has a special relationship to the world in which he or she lives...]

III. GOD’S PILGRIM

A. CHRISTIANS ARE IN THE WORLD, BUT NOT OF THE WORLD...

1. As Jesus mentioned in His prayer for His disciples - **Jn 17:15-16**
 2. Like Abraham, a Christian is a sojourner, a pilgrim - **He 11:13; 13:14; 1 Pe 1:1**
 3. We are fellow citizens with members of God’s family - **Ep 2:19**
- **As such, our true citizenship lies in heaven, not here on earth - Ph 3:20**

B. AS GOD’S PILGRIMS, WE HAVE SEVERAL OBLIGATIONS...

1. To conduct our sojourn on earth with fear - **1 Pe 1:17**
2. To abstain from worldly lusts - **1 Pe 2:11; 1 Jn 2:15-17**
3. To keep our conduct honorable, filled with good works - **1 Pe 2:12**

4. To obey the laws, and respect the leaders, of the countries in which we sojourn - **1 Pe 2: 13-17**

CONCLUSION

1. We have seen that a Christian is a person who “belongs to the Lord”, one who is...
 - a. God’s special person
 - b. God’s child
 - c. God’s pilgrim
2. The more we understand the significance of such privileges...
 - a. We ought to be filled with gratitude and humility
 - b. We ought to be moved to be the kind of people God intended
3. Are we living and conducting ourselves as those who “belong to the Lord”?
 - a. Are we acting like a special people?
 - b. Do we live like a child of God should?
 - c. Is our life truly a sojourn, or are we living like we want to make this earth our permanent home?

As we saw in our beginning text:

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.” (1 Co 6:19-20)

May the significance of belonging to God prompt us to always glorify God in our bodies and our spirits!

The Significance Of Being A Christian

Living By Faith

INTRODUCTION

1. An important aspect of being a Christian involves the element of “faith”...
 - a. The gospel to which a person responds in becoming a Christian is called “the faith” - **Ju 3**
 - b. Those who obeyed the gospel have been “faithful to the Lord” - **Ac 16:15; Co 1:2**
 - c. Christians are called referred to as “the household of faith” - **Ga 6:10**
2. Indeed, “faith” is the underlying principle of all the Christian’s conduct...
 - a. It is fundamental to our salvation in Christ - **Ro 1:16-17**
 - b. It is central to the life we now live in Christ - **Ga 2:20; 2 Co 5:7**
3. Yet the nature of faith and its importance in the life of Christian...
 - a. Are often misunderstood
 - b. Are often neglected

[As we continue to examine “**The Significance Of Being A Christian**”, we therefore wish to emphasize that it means “**Living By Faith**”! What that entails may be clearer as we first define...]

I. THE MEANING OF FAITH

A. INVOLVES THE IDEA OF BELIEF...

1. The certainty or conviction that one has in some truth or proposition
2. E.g., believing in things concerning Jesus and His kingdom - **Ac 8:12**
3. Such faith, or conviction, comes from the Word of God - **Ro 10:17**; cf. **Jn 20:30-31**

B. INVOLVES THE IDEA OF CONFIDENCE...

1. The willingness to place one’s trust and reliance on someone else
2. E.g., placing our trust in God, that He is reliable - **Ro 4:3,20-22**
3. We are to have similar trust in God - **1 Pe 4:19**

C. INVOLVES THE IDEA OF FIDELITY...

1. That one is loyal, committed, and can be trusted
2. E.g., a faithful steward is one who is reliable - **1 Co 4:2**
3. Our faithfulness (commitment, trustworthiness) is to last even to the point of death - **Re 2:10,13**

[A faithful Christian, then, is one who believes in the Word of God, he has confidence in the Person of God, and is himself loyal and trustworthy in the service of God. Now let’s take a look at what can be said about...]

II. THE LIFE OF FAITH

A. INVOLVES CONFESSING OUR FAITH...

1. I.e., acknowledging our belief in Jesus Christ before others
 2. Something we must do as a condition of salvation - **Ro 10:9,10**
 3. Something we do throughout our lives - **Mt 10:32,33; 1 Jn 4:15**
- **The life of faith is never ashamed to admit that one believes in Jesus Christ**

B. INVOLVES LIVING BY FAITH...

1. I.e., conducting one's life with trust in Jesus Christ - **Ga 2:20**
 2. Trusting in the works of Jesus, not our own; that His death was truly for our sins - **1 Co 15:1-3; Ti 3:5-7**
 3. Trusting in the words of Jesus, and living accordingly - e.g., **Mt 6:33,34; Lk 6:46-48**
- **The life of faith is one that seeks to live in harmony with the teaching of Jesus**

C. INVOLVES BENEFITING BY FAITH...

1. I.e., enjoying the blessings that come from a life of faith
 2. Such as joy and peace, hope and power - **Ro 15:13**
 3. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, we can receive such blessings - **Ep 3:12; Ph 4:6-7,13**
- **The life of faith does not go unrewarded in this life, even though its primary concern is the life to come**

D. INVOLVES MAINTAINING OUR FAITH...

1. I.e., remaining steadfast in the faith we have in Christ
2. There is a need to stand fast, for faith can turn into unbelief - **1 Co 15:1-2; He 3:12-19; 4:1-2,11**
3. To maintain faith, we must add to it other things such as virtue, knowledge, self-control, etc. - **2 Pe 1:5-11; 3:17-18**

CONCLUSION

1. A Christian is one who should take his faith very seriously...
 - a. It is essential to salvation (both being saved and remaining saved)
 - b. It is essential to life (to receive blessings now, and in the life to come)
2. Are you "**Living By Faith**"?
 - a. Do you believe what has been revealed about Jesus Christ?
 - b. Do you have confidence in Him, that He can deliver on what He promises?
 - c. Are you a trustworthy disciple of Jesus, someone He can count on to be faithful?

Unless we can answer in the affirmative to such questions, we have yet to appreciate that "**The Significance Of Being A Christian**" includes "**Living By Faith**"!

The Significance Of Being A Christian

Consecrated To God

INTRODUCTION

1. We have begun to see that there is much significance to being a Christian...
 - a. A Christian is **“a person reborn”**, experiencing a new creation that leads to a new life
 - b. He now **“belongs to the Lord”**, God’s special child that lives as a pilgrim
 - c. Who sojourns in this world **“living by faith”**, trusting in the Lord and being a trustworthy servant

2. Another significant fact about being a Christian involves the concept of **“sanctification”**...
 - a. The words “sanctify” and “sanctification” are translated from the Greek “hagiazō”
 - b. It means to make holy, to set apart for a special purpose; related words include holiness, consecration, saint-- As we shall see, this pertains to both our standing before God and our conduct before God

[Thus a Christian is **“Consecrated To God”**. As we take a closer look at this aspect of being a Christian, let’s first consider...]

I. THE PROGRESS OF SANCTIFICATION

A. ALL CHRISTIANS ARE SANCTIFIED...

1. Some understand sanctification as “all at once” or “in two stages”
 - a. E.g., the Wesleyan concept of “entire sanctification”
 - b. Some even suggesting that once “sanctified”, one can no longer sin
2. The Biblical evidence suggests otherwise:
 - a. The church at Corinth was made of people...
 - 1) Who were **“sanctified in Christ Jesus” - 1 Co 1:2**
 - 2) Who had been **“sanctified” - 1 Co 6:11**-- Note the past tense
 - b. Yet many of these people were still “babes in Christ” and “carnal” - **1 Co 3:1-3**
 - 1) They were filled with envy, strife and divisions
 - 2) They were acting carnally, as mere men
3. Thus, while Christians may not be perfect, they are still called “saints”
 - a. Note the use of the word “saint” in addressing all Christians - **Ro 1:7; 1 Co 1:2; Ph 1:1; Co 1:2**
 - b. Because they had been “set apart” to be “God’s holy people”, it was appropriate to be called “saints” - cf. **1 Pe 2:9**-- **This pertains to our standing before God; we are blessed to be considered His holy people**

B. CHRISTIANS ARE ALSO “BEING SANCTIFIED”...

1. Sanctification is an ongoing process

- a. Those in Christ are *“being sanctified”* - **He 2:11** (NKJV)
- b. It begins at conversion, and continues as we grow in the faith
- c. As Paul prayed for the Thessalonians: *“may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely”* - **1 Th 5:23**
2. Thus Christians are to pursue sanctification (holiness)
 - a. As the Hebrews were admonished - **He 12:14**
 - b. As Paul commanded the Corinthians - **2 Co 7:1**
3. Because God is holy, so we are to be holy in our conduct - **1 Pe 1:15-16**
- **This pertains to our conduct before God, our responsibility to live holy lives**

[God has therefore called Christians to be holy, set apart, sanctified. In obeying the gospel we have been sanctified; but if we are truly **“Consecrated To God”**, then we will pursue and perfect our holiness (i.e., our consecration). To assist us in this goal, let’s consider...]

II. THE PROCESS OF SANCTIFICATION

A. SANCTIFICATION IS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. Note how sanctification is tied in with the work of the Holy Spirit:
 - a. “sanctified by the Holy Spirit” - **Ro 15:16**
 - b. “sanctified...by the Spirit of our God” - **1 Co 6:11**
 - c. “sanctification by the Spirit” - **2 Th 2:13**
 - d. “the sanctifying work of the Spirit” - **1 Pe 1:2** (NASV)
2. The Holy Spirit naturally has an important role in our ongoing sanctification...
 - a. Because He was instrumental in our spiritual regeneration when we become Christians - cf. **Ti 3:5-6**
 - b. Our bodies serve as the temple of the Holy Spirit - **1 Co 6:19-20**
 - c. The Spirit is the instrumental agent by which God strengthens the inner man - **Ep 3:16**
- **How does the Spirit accomplish His work of ongoing sanctification? Read on...**

B. SANCTIFICATION IS ALSO THE WORK OF THE WORD OF GOD...

1. Note that sanctification is also said to be tied in with the Word of God:
 - a. “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.” - **Jn 17:17**
 - b. “that He might sanctify...by the word” - **Ep 5:26**
2. Since the Word of God is said to be “the sword of the Spirit” (**Ep 6:17**), the Word is evidently the instrument used by the Spirit to help bring about our sanctification
 - a. One who sets their mind on things the Spirit has revealed through the Word is setting their mind on “the things of the Spirit”
 - b. When we set our minds on “the things of the Spirit” (the Word of God), we are then able to “live according to the Spirit” - cf. **Ro 8:5**
 - c. Led by the Spirit through the Word of God, we will then produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, instead of the works of the flesh - cf. **Ga 5:16-22**
- **If we wish to live holy, sanctified lives, we must allow the Spirit to do His work through the Word of God!**

CONCLUSION

1. When a Christian understands that he or she...
 - a. Is **“a person reborn”**
 - b. Who now **“belongs to the Lord”**
 - c. And is **“living by faith”**...they should have no trouble accepting the idea that they are also **“consecrated to God”**

2. Do we appreciate the privilege of being **“Consecrated To God”**?
 - a. That God has blessed us to be part of “a holy nation”?
 - b. That God has called us to holiness, because He is holy?
 - c. That having sanctified us, He desires to sanctify us completely?-- **That He does this because He desires to dwell among us? - cf. 2 Co 6:17-18**

If we do, then we will take to heart the admonition of Paul:

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”
(2 Co 7:1)

Are we perfecting holiness in the fear of God?

The Significance Of Being A Christian

Guarded By The Power Of God

INTRODUCTION

1. Reviewing what we have seen thus far in this series, a Christian...
 - a. Is **“a person reborn”**, living in newness of life
 - b. Now **“belongs to the Lord”**, God’s special child sojourning in this world as a pilgrim
 - c. Is **“living by faith”**, trusting in the Lord and desiring to be a trustworthy servant
 - d. Is **“consecrated to God”**, set apart by the Spirit to pursue holiness

2. This does not mean being a Christian is easy...
 - a. The world in which we sojourn does not encourage godly living
 - b. There are powerful forces that are bent on our spiritual destruction
 - Of course, this is true whether we are Christians or not

3. But the significance of being a Christian includes help that others do not have...
 - a. From our Father in heaven, who is concerned for the child that now belongs to Him
 - b. His own special protection, available to those who remain faithful to Him

4. Peter writes of this protection in **1 Pe 1:5**...
 - a. He refers to how we are **“kept by the power of God through faith...”**
 - b. He employs a military term meaning “to mount guard as a sentinel; figuratively, to hem in, protect” (Strong’s)
 - **Therefore we can rightly say that a Christian is “Guarded By The Power Of God”!**

[To appreciate the need for such protection, the nature of it, and how we may ensure it in our lives will be the subject of our study. We begin by noting...]

I. SATAN’S GOAL: OUR DESTRUCTION

A. OUR ADVERSARY...

1. Satan is like a roaring lion - **1 Pe 5:8**
 - a. On the prowl
 - b. Seeking whom he may devour
2. He often appears as an angel of light - **2 Co 11:14**
 - a. Working through his ministers - **2 Co 11:15**
 - b. Misleading through false doctrines - **1 Ti 4:1-3**

B. THE CHRISTIAN’S NEED TO BEWARE...

1. Some say there is no need to be concerned
 - a. E.g., “once saved, always saved”
 - b. E.g., “the impossibility of apostasy”
 - But this would make all the warnings in the Bible pointless

2. The Bible warns about the danger of becoming hardened - **He 3:12-14**
 - a. Hardened by “the deceitfulness of sin”
 - b. Who better equipped to harden us than he “who deceives the whole world”? - **Re 12:9**

[Because the danger is real, the need to “*resist him*” (**1 Pe 5:9**) who seeks our destruction is very real! But we are not alone in our resistance; “*the God of all grace*” (**1 Pe 5:10**) stands ready to assist us. This leads to our next point...]

II. GOD’S PROVISION: OUR SAFEKEEPING

A. GOD IS OUR HELPER...

1. He provides Jesus Christ:
 - a. As our Mediator - **1 Ti 2:5**
 - b. As our Advocate - **1 Jn 2:1,2**
 - c. As our merciful and faithful High Priest - **He 2:17-18**
 - d. Whose blood cleanses us from our sins - **1 Jn 1:7-10**
2. He provides other blessings designed to keep us safe:
 - a. Our public assemblies and mutual edification - **He 10:24-25**
 - b. Our mutual edification - **He 3:12-13**
 - c. The Scriptures - **2 Ti 3:16-17**
 - d. Prayer - **Ph 4:6-7**
3. He therefore provides a way of escape:
 - a. In some cases, to avoid temptation altogether - **Mt 6:13; 26:41**
 - b. In other cases, to bear up and overcome the temptation - **1 Co 10:13**

B. GOD IS OUR VICTORY...

1. Our confidence comes from God’s power, not our own - **Ph 4:13**
2. He provides power that is greater than Satan - **Ep 3:16,20; 1 Jn 2:13-14; 4:4**

[Yes, it is God who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ (**1 Co 15:57**)! By His grace we are “**Guarded By The Power Of God**”. But that such grace might not be received in vain (cf. **2 Co 6:1**), we need to remember...]

III. OUR RESPONSIBILITY: REMAIN FAITHFUL

A. THE CHRISTIAN’S SECURITY...

1. The Bible teaches the security of the believer
 - a. No one can snatch a believer out of the hand of God - **Jn 10:28-29**
 - b. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ - **Ro 8:35-39**
 - But note carefully: these promises are for one who is a believer!
2. The Bible also teaches a believer may become an unbeliever - **He 3:12**
 - a. A believer can develop “an evil heart of unbeliever”
 - b. In so doing, such a person “departs from the living God”
 - When a believer becomes an unbeliever, the promises of security for the believer are no longer applicable!
3. This explains the many warnings in the Scriptures to remain faithful - e.g., **Re 2:10**

B. THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY...

1. Take to heart the many admonitions in Scripture:
 - a. To take heed - **1 Co 10:12**
 - b. Gird up the loins of your mind - **1 Pe 1:13**
 - c. Discipline yourself - **1 Co 9:27**
 - d. Root yourself in Christ and His love - **Ep 3:17; Co 2:7**
 - e. Put on the armor of God, that you might stand - **Ep 6:10-18**
 - f. Be strong in the grace of the Lord - **2 Ti 2:1**
 - g. Stand fast in the faith - **1 Co 16:13**
 - h. Resist the devil - **Ja 4:7; 1 Pe 5:8-9**
2. Take advantage of activities conducive to remaining faithful:
 - a. Daily prayer
 - b. Daily Bible study
 - c. Frequent association with fellow Christians
 - d. Attendance at the congregational assemblies
 - e. Development of personal usefulness to the Lord
 - f. Involvement in the work of the Lord
 - g. Acceptance of correction, and repentance as necessary

CONCLUSION

1. Yes, the significance of being a Christian is that one is **“Guarded By The Power Of God”**...
 - a. In the spiritual warfare that we face, we can stand strong **“in the power of His might”** - **Ep 6:10-13**
 - b. In resisting the devil, God will **“perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle”** us - **1 Pe 5:9-10**
2. But never lose sight of the importance of our faith...
 - a. Our resistance must be **“steadfast in the faith”** - **1 Pe 5:9**
 - b. We are **“kept by the power of God through faith”** - **1 Pe 1:5**

If we seek to enjoy being **“Guarded By The Power Of God”**, then let us not forget the admonition of our glorified Lord:

“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Re 2:10)

Are you remaining faithful to the Lord?

The Significance Of Being A Christian

Saved To Serve

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen throughout this series that the Christian is truly blessed...
 - a. **“A person reborn”**, he is provided the opportunity to live a new life
 - b. **“Belonging to the Lord”**, he is God’s special child
 - c. **“Living by faith”**, he walks with God
 - d. **“Consecrated to God”**, he has been set apart to live a holy life
 - e. **“Guarded by the power of God”**, he is not alone in his struggle against the powers of Satan and the evil world in which we live
2. But with blessings come responsibilities...
 - a. There are obligations that come with our new opportunities
 - b. There are duties that come with our new calling
3. Indeed, the Christian is a person who has been called to serve God...
 - a. We have been **“Saved To Serve”** - cf. **He 9:14; 12:28**
 - b. It is only “reasonable” that we be expected to serve God - **Ro 12:1**
 - c. Each person has a ministry (service) we are expected to fulfill - **Co 4:17; 2 Ti 4:5**

[Thus the concept of “servitude” or “servanthood” is a significant part of what it means to be a Christian. That our service to God might be more acceptable and fruitful, consider...]

I. THE GREATNESS OF SERVANTHOOD

A. BEING A SERVANT OF GOD IS A GREAT HONOR...

1. The title of “servant” was what many great men in the O.T. were called
 - a. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob - **Deu 9:27** (“Thy servants”)
 - b. Moses - **1 Ki 8:53** (“Thy servant”)
 - c. Joshua - **Josh 24:29** (“Servant of the Lord”)
 - d. Caleb - **Num 14:24** (“My servant”)
 - e. Job - **Job 1:8** (“My servant”)
 - f. Isaiah - **Isa 20:3** (“My servant”)
 - g. The prophets - **Jer 7:25** (“My servants”)
2. New Testament writers referred to themselves as “servants”...
 - a. James - **Ja 1:1**
 - b. Paul - **Ro 1:1; Ph 1:1**
 - c. Peter - **2 Pe 1:1**
 - d. Jude - **Ju 1**
 - e. John - **Re 1:1**

B. JESUS CAME TO SERVE...

1. He was foretold to come as the “Suffering Servant” - **Isa 52:13-53:12**
2. He “did not come to be served, but to serve” - **Mt 20:28; Ph 2:7**
3. Even as our Lord and Master, He exemplified the servitude He desires of His disciples - **Jn 13:12-17**

[What a honor, if God were to look upon us as “His servants” as He did these great men, including His own Son, Jesus Christ! He will, if we put into practice...]

II. THE CONCEPTS OF SERVANTHOOD

A. IT INVOLVES COMPLETE OBEDIENCE...

1. In a slave-master relationship...
 - a. The slave knows no law but his master's word
 - b. He has no rights of his own
 - c. He is the absolute possession of his master
 - d. He is bound to give his master unquestioning obedience
2. Does this describe our relationship to Christ?
 - a. It should, especially in light of **1 Co 6:19-20**
 - b. We have to come to Jesus on HIS terms, not our own - **Lk 6:46; Mt 7:21**

B. IT INVOLVES ABSOLUTE HUMILITY...

1. Otherwise, absolute obedience is not possible
 - a. When we have a humble opinion of ourselves, we are receptive to the idea of complete obedience
 - b. For example, consider Paul’s self-estimation - **1 Co 15:9-10; Ep 3:8; 1 Ti 1:15**
2. Does this describe our relationship to Christ and His Will?
 - a. Jesus said it should! - **Lk 17:10**
 - b. But if we murmur or complain about what Jesus tells us to do, can we really be considered “servants”?

C. IT INVOLVES ABSOLUTE LOYALTY...

1. Since we become servants **freely**, it should be expected that we:
 - a. Are to be loyal to Him first - cf. **Ga 1:10**
 - b. Do not consider our own profit or preference important, but that of the One we freely serve!
2. It is amazing how any can claim to be servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, while:
 - a. Complaining about having to do the will of God, OR...
 - b. Being negligent or slothful in carrying out His will
3. Yet some act as though they are being forced against their own will!
 - a. They don't “have to” serve the Lord Jesus...
 - 1) Of course, the alternative is not very inviting
 - 2) If we don't serve Jesus, by default we serve Satan, and are destined for hell!
 - b. But God by His grace has offered salvation, and how dare we ever grumble or complain that He calls us to life of service in grateful appreciation!

[That we not be negligent in our service, be aware of some...]

III. HINDRANCES TO SERVANTHOOD

A. SERVICE TO THE WRONG MASTER...

1. Jesus warned we cannot serve both God and Mammon - **Mt 6:24**
2. Serving the wrong things will render us fruitless - **Lk 8:14**
2. Paul illustrated we can only serve the one we obey - **Ro 6:16**

B. PLACING LIMITATIONS ON OUR SERVICE...

1. Some limit how, where, and when they will serve
 - a. As Moses tried to do - **Exo 3:10,11**
 - b. Many will serve God, but only when convenient
2. Some limit who they will serve
 - a. As Jonah tried to do - Jon 1:1-3
 - b. Many will serve God, but not when it means serving others (especially people we don't like)

C. POSSESSING CERTAIN ATTITUDES...

1. Such as sluggishness and laziness - cf. **He 6:11,12; Mt 25:26**
2. Such as ingratitude - cf. **2 Co 8:9; Ph 2:5-7**
 - a. Which often comes when we forget how graciously we have been served
 - b. We like service with a smile; are we willing to give service with a smile?
3. Such as pride or self-centeredness
 - a. As when self-pity affected Elijah - **1 Ki 19:13-18**
 - b. As when some preached Christ out of envy - **Ph 1:15-18**
 - c. As when some seek for recognition, praise - **Mt 6:1-4**
 - Humility and unselfishness are basic prerequisites for servanthood - **Ac 20:19; Ph 2:3-4**

CONCLUSION

1. The Christian has been "**Saved To Serve**"...
 - a. Called to serve God and the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. Called to serve his brethren and those in the world
 - **It is a noble calling, one that we should accept with humility and gratitude**
2. If one chooses not to serve God...
 - a. Then they remain a slave to sin - **Ro 16:16a**
 - b. And the end of such slavery is eternal death - **Ro 6:16b**
3. But when one chooses to serve God...
 - a. Their servitude leads to righteousness - **Ro 16:16c**
 - b. And the end of such service is eternal life - **Ro 6:22**

May what the apostle Paul wrote of the brethren in Rome be true of all Christians today...

“But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” (Ro 6:17-18)

Have you been set free from sin, that you might serve Jesus Christ? - cf. **Ro 6:1-7**

The Significance Of Being A Christian

Connected To Other Christians

INTRODUCTION

1. In summarizing some of the significant things of being a Christian, we have seen that it involves both blessings and responsibilities...
 - a. **“A person reborn”** provides the blessing of living in newness of life
 - b. **“Belonging to the Lord”** requires we live up to the calling of being God’s special child
 - c. **“Living by faith”** demands that we continue to trust in God and His Word
 - d. **“Consecrated to God”** presumes that we pursue holiness in the fear of the Lord
 - e. **“Guarded by the power of God”** calls for us to stand strong in the power of His might
 - f. **“Saved to serve”** implies that we work together with other Christians

2. It is this last thought that we expand upon as we conclude this series...
 - a. Christianity involves activity
 - b. Some of that activity involves **“working together”** with other Christians
 - c. Each Christian needs to understand the importance of our collective work

3. Sadly, many Christians live as though they believed in **“solo Christianity”**...
 - a. That being a Christian involves minimal involvement with the local congregation
 - 1) They act like “independent” Christians - aloof, isolated, solitary
 - 2) The congregation’s work becomes “what they are doing down there...” (instead of what “we” are doing)
 - b. Why is this case?
 - 1) Some may not understand the congregational facet of life in Christ
 - 2) Some may intend to be mavericks and refuse to be a real part of a congregation

4. The consequences of “solo Christianity” are dangerous...
 - a. Such as inactivity, unhappiness, spiritual stagnation, etc.
 - b. Recent studies suggest that people without active involvement in a church are more likely to have weakened immune systems, therefore more likely to get sick
 - c. The bottom line is that Christians rarely survive spiritually apart from their proper relationship with other Christians
 - d. Like a glowing ember removed from the fire of which it is a part...it soon cools and dies (while the other embers remain hot)

[Of course, it is not God’s intention that this happen. That is why one significance of being a Christian is that we are **“Connected To Other Christians”**. Consider...]

I. THE “TOGETHER” ASPECT OF LIFE IN CHRIST

A. ILLUSTRATIONS OF TOGETHERNESS...

1. One illustration is that of **“fellowship”** - cf. **Ac 2:42; 1 Co 1:9; 1 Jn 1:3,7**

- a. Christians are “fellows”
 - 1) “Fellow citizens” - **Ep 2:11-22**
 - 2) “Fellow heirs” - **Ep 3:6**
 - 3) “Fellow workers” - **Ph 4:3**
 - 4) “Fellow servants” - **Co 1:7**
 - 5) “Fellow soldiers” - **Ph 2:25**
- b. We work together as we extend “the right hand of fellowship” - cf. **Ga 2:9**
 - The idea is that we share together in the work and rewards of Christian life
2. Another illustration is that of “**brotherhood**” - **1 Pe 2:17**
 - a. In Christ, we enjoy a family relationship - cf. **Mk 3:31-35**
 - b. We are the “house” or “family” of God - **Ep 2:19; 1 Ti 3:15**
 - The Christian needs to have a “family” consciousness about other Christians
3. One more illustration is that of “**membership**” - **1 Co 12:27**
 - a. The church is Christ’s “body” - **Ep 1:22-23**
 - b. Christians are “members of one another” - **Ro 12:5; Ep 4:25**
 - c. As members of the body, there are “corporate” (Latin “corpus” means “body”) responsibilities
 - d. Body members are functionally interdependent - **1 Co 12:12-27**
 - 1) Not all members have the same function - **Ro 12:3-8**
 - 2) If the body (and its members) is to grow, each member must contribute - **Ep 4:16**
 - There are not “vestigial” organs or “decorative” parts; i.e., no useless or unimportant members

B. THE CONCEPT OF LOCAL CHURCH “MEMBERSHIP”...

1. The “local” church is different from the “universal” church
 - a. “The church” of Christ universally is the sum of all Christians - cf. **Mt 16:18**
 - b. “A church” of Christ locally is a specific group of Christians who function together as a congregation - cf. **Ac 14:23; 1 Co 1:2; Ro 16:16**
2. One is **added** by the Lord Himself to the “universal” church upon obedience to the gospel - cf. **Ac 2:41,47**
3. One then should **join** himself to a “local” church - cf. **Ac 9:26-28**
 - a. The mere provision of local churches in God’s Word implies...
 - 1) A divine purpose for the local church
 - 2) A corresponding responsibility of Christians to avail themselves of it
 - b. The idea of becoming a Christian and never a part of a local congregation is foreign to the Scriptures!
4. Christians are obligated to participate in the life of a faithful congregation, whenever possible
 - a. The command to withdraw from certain ones implies that participation in the fellowship with other Christians is not optional - cf. **1 Co 5:1-13; 2 Th 3:6**
 - b. Much of what a Christian is to do is “for the common good” - **1 Co 12:7** (NASV)

[The main idea is that as Christians we have responsibilities to other Christians, that in Christ we are truly “**Connected To Other Christians**”. Therefore consider some...]

II. SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO OTHER CHRISTIANS

A. ATTITUDES TO MAINTAIN...

1. Concern for one another - **1 Co 12:25-26**
2. Humility, lowliness of mind - **Ph 2:3**
3. A peaceable spirit - **Ro 14:17-19**
4. Appreciation for others and their work - e.g., **1 Th 1:2-3**
5. Willingness to cooperate, work together - **1 Co 12:21**
 - a. "It marks a big step in a man's development when he comes to realize that other men can be called on to help him do a better job than he can do alone" (**Andrew Carnegie**)
 - b. "Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success" (**ibid.**)
6. Friendliness, warmth - cf. **Phile 1:7**
7. Gentleness, meekness - **Ga 6:1**
8. Forbearance, longsuffering, patience - **Co 3:12-13**
9. Forgiveness - **Co 3:13**
10. Love - **Jn 13:34-35**

B. THINGS TO DO...

1. Identify as a member of a faithful congregation (place membership) - cf. **Ac 9:26**
 - a. Drifters, "floating members", "members at large", etc., are missing an important aspect of Christianity
 - b. The same goes for passive "spectators", those "just along for the ride", "permanent visitors", etc.
 - c. One places membership with the intent of being an actual, functioning member - not a mere appendage to the body
 - d. It involves making real commitments to the group
2. Pray for other Christians, especially those of one's own congregation - **Ph 1:9-11**
3. Submit to the congregation's elders - **1 Th 5:12,13; He 13:7,17**
4. Attend and participate in the assemblies of the congregation - **He 10:24-25**
 - a. The Christian enjoys and benefits from private and family worship, but must not neglect God's provision for collective, congregational worship and Bible study
 - b. Every aspect of our assemblies are vital to the Christian
 - 1) The Lord's Supper - **Ac 2:42; 20:7; 1 Co 11:17-34**
 - 2) Praying - **Ac 2:42; 4:23-31; 12:12**
 - 3) Singing - **Ep 5:19; Co 3:16**
 - 4) Preaching and teaching - **Ac 20:7**
 - 5) Giving as we have been prospered - **1 Co 16:1-2; 2 Co 8,9**
 - c. Our assemblies provide an opportunity for three different involvements:
 - 1) Help in providing for the assembly (e.g., cleaning the building, preparing the communion trays, leading in the service, etc.)
 - 2) Actual attendance at the assembly - attending every service is critical to the overall growth and health of the congregation (let alone self!)
 - 3) Participation in the assembly, to the extent of one's ability
 - a) Worship is not a "spectator" activity
 - b) The crucial question is not "How did the preacher do?", but "How did I do?"
 - c) If one can do no more than listen, then listen in a manner that shows reverence and respect to God's Word! - cf. **Ac 17:11** ("they received the

word with all readiness...”)

- d. Assembling together is not merely a routine to perform, but a God-given provision for our spiritual good
 - 1) Quibbles and questions about whether we have to, complaints, neglects, etc., reveal an attitude of taking lightly the opportunity for Christians to be together
 - 2) God wants to give us something in our assemblies - our involvement or non-involvement reveals much of whether we desire to accept what God has for us!
-- To minimize this aspect of Christianity jeopardizes not only one’s own soul, but the souls of others! - **He 10:24-25**
5. Contribute financially to the work of the congregation - **1 Co 16:1-2, 2 Co 9:6-7**
6. Engage personally and directly in the work of the congregation
 - a. Evangelism - e.g., **Ac 8:4**
 - b. Edification - **Ro 14:19**
 - c. Benevolence - **Ac 2:44-45; 4:34-35**
7. Help maintain unity in the congregation - **Jn 17:20-23; 1 Co 1:10; Ro 15:5-7; Ep 4:1-3**
8. Participate in the discipline of the congregation, both instructive as well as corrective - **1 Co 5:1-13; Ga 6:1-2; 2 Th 3:6-15**
9. Extend courtesy and hospitality - **Ro 12:13; 1 Pe 4:9**
10. Find an individual role and fill it - **Co 4:17; 2 Ti 4:5**

CONCLUSION

1. Much of the joy in Christ comes from our relationships with other Christians...
 - a. John had great joy when he heard others walking in the truth - **3 Jn 3-4**
 - b. Paul had joy when he remembered his fellowship with others - **Ph 1:3-5**
-- **Can we not see the importance of being “Connected To Other Christians”?**
2. This connection is not only crucial to having joy, but to remaining faithful to the Lord...
 - a. Experiencing all of the blessings the Lord provides for His servants
 - b. Encouraged by others to be diligent in fulfilling our responsibilities as Christians

As we conclude this study of **“The Significance Of Being A Christian”**, we have certainly not exhausted what it means to be a Christian. But I pray that in some way I have both encouraged and exhorted you to greater faithfulness and fruitfulness in the service of our Lord!