A little boy, in trouble with his mother, decided to run away from home. He took off down the sidewalk on his tricycle and a neighbor soon observed him coming past every 10 or 15 minutes. So the neighbor stopped the little guy:

"Billy, why are you going around and around the block on your trike?" "I'm running away from home," Billy said, "but I'm not allowed to cross the street by myself."

**When properly studying the Word, *comparing* spiritual truths with spiritual truths (**[**1 Corinthians 2:13**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.13&t=NKJV)**), it becomes *clear* that there is a distinct *link* between being filled with (controlled by) the *Spirit* of God and being filled with the *Word* of God.**

**Focal Point of the Christian Life
By Charles Strong of** [**Bible One**](http://www.bibleone.net/)

The term “Christian life” within this commentary means to *effectively* live for Jesus Christ in accordance with His Word, as opposed to living in *contrast* to His Word. It is a two pronged issue *centered* specifically *in* and *on* Jesus Christ -- its focal point, consisting of (1) *self-denial* (*i.e.*, dying to self) and of (2) *following Christ*.

(Although this document endeavors to clarify the two essential issues *necessary* for living the Christian life, it is critical to understand that Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, is indeed the *embodiment* of the “focal point” of Christianity. Any doctrine that diminishes the *importance* of Jesus Christ as the most important aspect [or Person] of Christianity [*i.e.*, *minimizes* His deity, *reduces* the significance of His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary, or in general *shifts* the focus from God the Son to God the Father] *must* be avoided at all costs. *All such efforts are born of Satan*.

For a review of the deity of Jesus Christ see [Bible One - Charles Strong's Deity of Jesus Christ](http://bibleone.net/deity0fJC.htm) or [Deity of Jesus Christ](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/8a4986c83891c9eb013896a10ec164fa.page?locale=en#Deity%20of%20Jesus%20Christ) in this website.)

A Christian has a *beginning* followed by a *period* of spiritual growth (or stagnation/decay) which will *end* when he passes on from this temporal life. This will be *followed* by an appearance before Christ at His Judgment Seat, where *every* Christian’s works will be judged, to *either* be rewarded or to suffer loss ([1 Corinthians 3:11-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.11-15&t=NKJV); [2 Corinthians 5:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.10&t=NKJV)) — a determination that will be efficacious *only* during the soon coming Messianic Era, the 1,000 year (Millennial) reign of Christ *over* the earth ([Revelation 20:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4&t=NKJV)).

(This commentary does not address the various aspects and/or eventual developments of the Christian life. For that commentary see, in this site, [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php) by Arlen Chitwood.)

The purpose of this commentary is to focus on the two issues, pointed out in the first paragraph, which result in a true/biblical Christian life.

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

*For whoever desires to save his life [soul] will lose it, but whoever loses his life [soul] for My sake will find it.*

*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*

*For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”* ([Matthew 16:24-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-27&t=NKJV))

**Denial of Self** (Taking-up One’s Cross)

Life is a series of choices. From the moment a person *rises* each day to the time he *falls* asleep he is faced with multiple-hundreds of choices. Throughout his *temporal* life he is *subject to* and *executes* multiple-millions of choices. One of the strongest inclinations a person faces has to do with *staying alive*. The need to remain alive affects *many* of the choices with which a person faces *during* his lifetime.

Just as any person’s physical life is *important*, a Christian’s spiritual life should be *more vital*. The two are actually *linked*. This is to say that a Christian’s *spiritual* life is intrinsically connected to many of the decisions he makes regarding his *physical* life. But unfortunately, a person’s life, be it physical or spiritual, is *often* affected by one’s *pride*. And of *all* sins defined within the Word of God, the issue of *pride* is the *most egregious and sinister*.

*Of the seven sins most hated by God, the sin of pride ranks first.*

*These six things the LORD hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:*

*a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood,*

*a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil,*

*a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren.* ([Proverbs 6:16-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+6.16-19&t=NKJV))

*Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD . . . .* ([Proverbs 16:5a](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+16.5a&t=NKJV))

Pride *was* (and continues to be) the sin of Satan.

*How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!*

*For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north;*

*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”* ([Isaiah 14:12-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.12-14&t=NKJV); *cf.* [1 Timothy 3:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+3.6&t=NKJV))

Pride *deceives* the heart ([Jeremiah 49:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jeremiah+49.16&t=NKJV)) and *hardens* the spirit ([Daniel 5:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+5.20&t=NKJV)), which will most certainly *bring* the judgment of God.

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* ([Proverbs 16:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+16.18&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Isaiah 14:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+14.15&t=NKJV); [Obadiah 1:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Obadiah+1.4&t=NKJV))

So it is most natural in this life (in alignment with the “god of this age” [[2 Corinthians 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+4.4&t=NKJV)]) to *think* of one’s self *first*, to elevate one’s self-interest and wellbeing *always before all else*. This is in fact the *approach* of Satan, who “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” ([1 Peter 5:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+5.8&t=NKJV)), toward *all* occupants of earth. And there is *nothing* more devastating and damaging to one’s spiritual life than to be *ruled* by one’s *pride* — to make one’s life-altering decisions in *accordance* with this most ruinous trait — to *live a life of self-gratification*.

Therefore, to *deny* one’s self is to *reject* one’s pride, which is a key component in the exercise of the Christian life. This was reiterated by Christ when He instructed each of His disciples to “take up his cross.” The cross symbolized death, and death conveys a *separation*. In context Christ was stating that to live a Christian life, one must *separate* himself from *pride* and *all* with which this aspect of human nature is associated, *i.e.*, personal appeal, friends, ambition, desires, goals, and, even family ([Matthew 10:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.37&t=NKJV); [Luke 14:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+14.26&t=NKJV)). Essentially, a Christian is instructed to put Christ and all that Christ represents *first* in his life — before and above *everything else*.

Just as a person who is lost must make a *decision* to place his trust in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation ([Acts 16:30-31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+16.30-31&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:8-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8-9&t=NKJV)), a Christian must make a *decision* to place Jesus Christ *first* in all his concerns and activities in order to *live* the Christian life. But *unlike* the decision for eternal salvation by one who is lost, which is a one-time and unalterable transaction between a person and God, the decision by a Christian to place Christ *before all else* is a *continuing*, *daily* matter (*i.e.*, one which he may “take back” at any time…but with eventual and grave consequences).

**Following Christ**

To *follow* Christ is a *dual* matter involving (1) *absorption* of and *adherence* to the written Word of God and (2) *faith*. *Each* is of vital importance and *neither* must be minimized.

Absorption of and Adherence to the Written Word of God

Scripture clearly teaches that spiritual activity at every level *must not* emanate from a Christian’s *own* inner resources (*i.e.*, from “self”), but *from* the Holy Spirit who resides within the Christian, who may empower the Christian for service, and who has sealed the Christian as the guarantee of his inheritance until he is redeemed ([1 Corinthians 2:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.4&t=NKJV); [3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.16&t=NKJV); [6:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+6.19&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 1:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+1.13-14&t=NKJV); [1 Thessalonians 1:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Thessalonians+1.5&t=NKJV)).

In light of this the apostle Paul directed all Christians to be filled with [controlled by] the Holy Spirit.

*And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation* [excess]; *but be filled with* [controlled by] *the Spirit,*

*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

*giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ([Ephesians 5:18-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18-20&t=NKJV))

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is *not* a secondary transcendental experience to be achieved by Christians *through* some elaborate and emotional spectacle as *some* Christian denominations believe. When properly studying the Word, *comparing* spiritual truths with spiritual truths ([1 Corinthians 2:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.13&t=NKJV)), it becomes *clear* that there is a distinct *link* between being filled with (controlled by) the *Spirit* of God and being filled with the *Word* of God.

This may be seen by *comparing* [Ephesians 5:18-20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+5.18-20&t=NKJV) (above) *with* [Colossians 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+3.16&t=NKJV), *companion* passages of Scripture, each shedding light *on the other*.

*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly* [abundantly] *in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* ([Colossian 3:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossian+3.16&t=NKJV)).

The comparison of these two passages, *both* addressing the *same* issue (*i.e.*, being properly influenced and controlled by God), reveals that when one *allows* the Word to dwell richly (abundantly) within him, he is *then* filled with the Holy Spirit, *i.e.*, in a *position* to be *influenced* by the Holy Spirit in making *appropriate* spiritual decisions *in all situations*.

The correlation *between* being filled with the Spirit of God and the absorption of and adherence to the Word of God is unmistakable. Instead of an *emotional* gyration, accompanied by some *outward* quasi-spiritual display (*e.g.*, speaking in some “unknown” language), being filled with the Spirit of God is actually the *progressive* ability of the Spirit to *influence* a Christian by *means* of (utilizing) the Word of God. Conversely, there can be *no* influence by the Spirit if the Christian remains *ignorant* of God’s Word.

This being the case, is it any wonder that there is so *little* Spirit-led activity throughout Christendom today? But then this should *not* be surprising to the student of God’s Word, which *reveals* that the spiritual condition of mankind that *precedes* Christ’s *return* for His Church will be *dismal* ([2 Thessalonians 2:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Thessalonians+2.1ff&t=NKJV)). Throughout Christendom the emphasis is *not* on the study of the *meat* (solid food) of the Word; *rather*, it is on its *milk* ([2 Corinthians 3:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+3.1-2&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 5:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.13-14&t=NKJV)) and *various* emotional and feel-good *activities*.

To follow Christ it is *necessary* to know Christ — the *Living* Word that is *uniquely expressed* by the *Written* Word. Indeed, *all* of God’s written Word (both the Old and New Testaments) is *about Jesus Christ*.

This is often *not* understood by Christians relative to the Old Testament, a fact that is *dispelled* by Christ in His revelation to the two on the road to Emmaus ([Luke 24:25-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.25-27&t=NKJV)). God *expects* His children to study *all* of His Word, for through it runs *richly* the lessons and examples (types vs. antitypes) that will *guide* them ([1 Corinthians 10:1-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+10.1-12&t=NKJV)).

(In studying the Word, it is suggested that the reader will be well-equipped to do so by reading the book, [The Study of Scripture](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/the-study-of-scripture.php#The%20Study%20of%20Scripture) by Arlen L. Chitwood in this site.)

It should be *clearly* understood that one of the fundamentals of the Christian life is the *absorption of and adherence to the written Word of God*.

Faith

The other essential in following Christ is found in the following verse of Scripture.

*As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord* [*i.e.*, “by faith”], *so* [in the same manner, by faith] *walk in Him.* ([Colossians 2:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.6&t=NKJV))

In fact, this can *only* be accomplished when one is “rooted and built up *in* Him and established *in* the faith” ([Colossians 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Colossians+2.7&t=NKJV)), a reference to that which has *already* been discussed, the absorption of and adherence to the written Word of God (the revelation of the Living Word).

To live *by* faith is most certainly what the apostle Paul meant when he stated, “For we walk by faith, not by sight” ([2 Corinthians 5:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.7&t=NKJV)). Faith is indeed one of the *fundamentals* of the Christian Life. Not only is it a *key factor* in one’s spiritual *birth* ([Romans 1:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+1.17&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.11&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.8&t=NKJV)), it is *also* a key factor in one’s spiritual *life* ([Hebrews 10:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.38&t=NKJV)).

This essential may also be found in example and in statement within the Old Testament, to wit:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.* ([Proverbs 3:5-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Proverbs+3.5-6&t=NKJV); [Psalm 37:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+37.3&t=NKJV), [5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+37.5&t=NKJV); [Genesis 22:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.1ff&t=NKJV); etc.)

One *cannot* ignore this fact *if* he reads chapter eleven in the book of Hebrews, the great chapter on living *by* faith as demonstrated by various individuals *throughout* the Old Testament.

The sum of this matter (and this study) is given at the end of this account in chapter eleven ([Hebrews 11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11&t=NKJV)) and in the beginning of chapter twelve ([Hebrews 12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12&t=NKJV)) where the writer of the book of Hebrews states:

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us* [*i.e.*, denial of self, taking up one’s cross], *and let us run* [by faith] *with endurance the race that is set before us* [*i.e.*, the Christian Life], *looking unto Jesus* [*i.e.*, by absorbing and adhering to the written Word — the true reflection of the Living Word], *the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* ([Hebrews 12:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1-2&t=NKJV))

These then are the *essential* components of the “focal point of the Christian life”— *denial of self and following Christ*.

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[Bible One - Charles Strong's Focal Point of the Christian Life](http://www.bibleone.net/Focal-Point.htm)

For further study in this matter please read the following two books by Arlen Chitwood:

[Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Salvation of the Soul](http://bibleone.net/SOS.htm), or in this site [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php).

[Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Let Us Go On](http://bibleone.net/LUGO.htm)

Also see [Holy Spirit – Ministries and Filling!](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-one.php#Holy%20Spirit%20%E2%80%93%20Ministries%20and%20Filling!) in this site.