

How to Be A Happy Christian

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Two Types of Christians

Having grown up in a minister's home and having been a minister myself for many years, I have noticed that there are really two types of Christians. The first type is what I call a happy Christian. The second type is what I call; you guessed it, an unhappy Christian. The words "unhappy" and "Christian" don't even belong in the same sentence, but sadly these two words do accurately describe some of God's people.

Why would you be unhappy when God wants you to be happy? Let's face it, life is better when we are happy. Jesus wants us to be happy. He plainly said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus even began His famous Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) by telling us how to be happy. The Christian life is supposed to be a happy life and God's desire is that you would be a happy Christian.

What follows in this booklet are the "Top Ten Ways to be a Happy Christian." I can assure you, based on the authority of God's Word, that if you will do these things, you will indeed be a happy Christian.

Top Ten Ways to be a Happy Christian

1. Be certain that you are saved.

My friend, if you do not have the full assurance of your salvation, you will never be truly happy. If there is a nagging doubt in the back of your mind as to whether or not you are truly saved, you are defeated already. Living life without the full assurance of your salvation is like driving a car with the emergency brakes on. In other words, your progress is impeded.

Some people have the attitude that they can never really know for certain whether or not they are saved until they die. In their minds, God will make that decision at the end of their lives when He considers how well they lived. Let me say plainly that although many people believe this, nothing could be further from the truth. God does not decide whether or not to let us into heaven based on how well we have lived our lives. God decides whether or not we go to heaven based on whether or not we have accepted His Son, Jesus Christ, as our personal Lord and Savior. Let me explain this more fully.

The Bible teaches that heaven is a perfect place. In heaven, "there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). We all believe that heaven is perfect. What concerns us is that we know we're not perfect. The Bible says clearly, "There is none who does well" (Psalm 14:1). The Bible also says that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Now we have a problem. How can imperfect people go to a perfect heaven?

That question is at the heart of all the religions of the world. How can imperfect people go to a perfect heaven? There are really two ways you can try to answer that question:

1. Try to make yourself perfect.

Sadly, many people are trying to do just that. They are attempting to make themselves acceptable in God's eyes by doing good deeds, saying their prayers, and giving their resources. As important as all of these

things are, none of them will make us acceptable to God. Remember, the Bible says we have all sinned, and there is nothing we can do in and of ourselves to make ourselves acceptable to God. Even if we became perfect from now on (which is highly unlikely!!), we still need forgiveness for our former sins, and there is no way we can forgive ourselves.

2. Place your faith in the Perfect One, Jesus

Christ

Since God knew we would sin and be completely unable to save ourselves, He devised a plan whereby His Son would come to this earth and live a completely sinless life. The Bible says that Jesus was “without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). He never did anything wrong. Yet He knew that we would do plenty of things wrong and He also knew that “the wages of sin *is* death” (Romans 6:23). And so in the greatest act of love the world has ever known, Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins. Think about that...the Perfect One paying for the sins of all of us imperfect ones.

The Bible says it this way, “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21). Jesus took our sins upon Himself and He will give us His righteousness if we will simply trust Him to save us. The Bible says, “having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). That’s how to have peace...by trusting Jesus!! When we place our faith in Jesus, He gives His righteousness to us. In that moment, we are saved.

Having explained the good news of salvation so fully, now let me ask you a simple question. How certain are you that you are saved? Are you 100% certain? Are you 50% certain? Are you 80% certain? Are you 90% certain? My friend, for far too many years I lived my life without the full assurance of my salvation. As a result, I lived a defeated life. That all changed for me several years ago when I settled my relationship with the Lord.

If you have any question as to whether or not you are truly saved...if you are anywhere less than 100% certain on this all-important matter, I strongly encourage you to make things right with God right now. Get this matter settled once and for all and I promise you that you will have a joy and a peace beyond anything you have ever known. If the following prayer reflects how you feel, pray it to God right now. He will answer this prayer, save your soul, and give you the assurance you so desperately need. He has promised that “*whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Romans 10:13).

Dear Jesus,

I have sinned and I am sorry. Please forgive me and change my heart. I want to know that I am saved. I believe You died for my sins. I turn from those sins and ask You to save me. Thank You for hearing and for answering my prayer. I trust You and You alone to save me. In Your Name I pray, Amen.

My friend, if you prayed that prayer, and if you are trusting Jesus to answer it, you now have the assurance of your salvation. You are now on your way to being a happy Christian and living a happy, peaceful life.

And remember, the assurance of your salvation comes not from how you feel but from what God said, and God said that “*whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*” (Romans 10:13). So trust Him to do what He promised He would do!!

2. Be baptized.

The first thing God wants a new Christian to do is to be baptized. In the Great Commission, Jesus plainly instructed His followers to baptize new converts.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

Now let’s think about baptism for a moment. The first thing we need to understand is that baptism has nothing to do with salvation. Baptism does not make us Christians. Baptism only makes us wet!! The purpose of baptism is not to help us become Christians. The purpose of baptism is to show others that we already are Christians. Baptism does not wash our sins away. Only Jesus can do that. Baptism is simply our way

of showing others publicly what Jesus has already done in our hearts privately.

Perhaps the following words will help us to understand baptism more clearly. Let's think about the meaning of baptism, the method of baptism, and the **moment** of baptism.

The Meaning of Baptism

Remember, baptism has nothing to do with salvation, but it is a picture of salvation. The Bible says, "Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

When a person is baptized he is saying, "I have been forgiven of my sins. I am trusting Jesus as my Savior and Lord. I am a new person." He is saying all of that without saying a word. He is saying that symbolically by being baptized. Again, baptism is not salvation, but it is a picture, a symbol, of salvation. That is the meaning of baptism.

The Method of Baptism

Now in order for the meaning of baptism to be properly understood, the method of baptism must be properly expressed. How should a person be baptized?

The word "baptize" is a Greek word that literally means "to immerse." To immerse means to lower under the water and then to lift back out of the water. It is through this process of immersion that one is saying, "I have died to an old way of living and I have been raised to walk in a new way of life." Without immersion, there is no clear picture of what happened when you were saved. Jesus was immersed in the Jordan River. The Ethiopian eunuch was immersed in water as well. Clearly, immersion is the New Testament method of baptism. The important thing is not what the Baptists or the Methodists or the Catholics teach. The important thing is what the Bible teaches and the Bible teaches baptism by immersion.

The Moment of Baptism

The only remaining question about baptism is this: "When a person should be baptized?" The answer to that question, taught clearly in the New Testament, is that a person should be baptized **after** he has been saved. Think about it. To be baptized before you get saved would be like trying to show a picture of something that never happened. Believer's baptism is for believers. It is to be done after salvation has taken place.

If you are saved and have never followed Jesus in believer's baptism, I encourage you to do so as quickly as possible. It won't make you any more saved, but it will make you obedient and God always blesses obedience.

3. Spend time with Jesus each day.

One of the most important things you can do as a Christian is to spend time with Jesus each day. In John 15, Jesus used an illustration that helps us understand the importance of closeness to Him. He explained that He is the Vine and we are the branches. The only way a branch can bear fruit is to be connected to the vine. In the same way, the only way a believer can experience the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control...see Galatians 5:22-23) is to be connected to Jesus. Jesus is the Source of all of those wonderful qualities. They come from Him. You and I cannot produce love, joy, and peace ourselves. We can only experience these qualities if we are closely connected to Jesus. These qualities spring forth from the heart of the person who is rightly related to Jesus. As we have seen, that relationship is **established** when we receive Christ as our Savior. Now we will see that that relationship is **nurtured** as we spend time with Christ each day.

Perhaps you have heard about having a "quiet time." Or maybe that phrase is new to you. What does it mean? What exactly is a "quiet time"?

A "quiet time" is that time you spend alone with God each day. It is a meeting time with God. Think

about that. God wants to meet with you each day so He can listen to you share your heart with Him and then in turn share His heart with you. He said so Himself. His invitation is, “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (Jeremiah 33:3).

So how do we go about having a quiet time? What are we supposed to do? Well, as is true in every area of life, Jesus has shown us the way. As you read through the New Testament, you will find Jesus frequently withdrawing from the crowds so that He could spend some time alone with His Father. My favorite verse in the New Testament about Jesus’ own quiet time is found in the gospel of Mark. The Bible says, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35). In this one verse we learn from Jesus the three things that are required in order to have an effective quiet time...a time, a place, and a plan.

A Time

If you are going to meet with God on a regular basis, you will have to set a time to do it. It will not just happen automatically. We have a time to get up, a time to eat lunch, a time for important meetings, and a time to go to bed. If we are going to have an effective “quiet time,” we will have to set a time on our appointment book to meet with God each day.

I encourage you to set aside 15 minutes or so (at least) in the morning each day for your quiet time. The Bible is full of examples of people who met with God in the morning. That’s what Jesus did. If you think about it, meeting with God in the morning just makes sense. It allows us to commit our day to Him before it begins.

A Place

You will also need a designated place where you can meet with God. Jesus went to a private place. I recommend a favorite chair, the kitchen table, the back porch...anywhere where you will not be disturbed as you meet with God. I have one friend, a godly lady, who has her quiet time each morning in her bed. I have tried that, but I must confess that when I stay in bed to have my quiet time, my quiet time becomes very quiet because I go back to sleep!! So my advice is to get up, get out of the bed, and get to that special place as early in the morning as you possibly can.

A Plan

The psalmist said, “Your word *is* a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105). That’s what we need in this life...a lamp and a light to show us the right way more clearly and that’s exactly what the Bible does.

There are a lot of good Bible reading plans that help you know what to read each day:

1. A Proverb a day
2. Five Psalms a day
3. Two chapters a day in the Old Testament
4. Two chapters a day in the New Testament
5. And many other plans as well!!

My purpose is not to tell you what plan to use but to encourage you to get a plan and stick to it each day.

As you read, ask yourself these questions:

1. Is there a command to obey?
2. Is there a sin to avoid?
3. Is there a promise to claim?

Remember, when you read the Bible you are reading God's Word and you are putting yourself in a position to hear from God. Before you begin reading, breathe this prayer to God: "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (Psalm 119:18). He will answer that prayer and His Holy Spirit will help you understand what you are reading.

After you have read from God's Word, you are ready to pray. While prayer is simply talking to God, you might want to use the following "ACTS" acrostic as a guide:

Adoration Father, I worship and adore You for Who You are. You are my Savior, Father, Healer, and Friend.

Confession Father, please forgive me of my sins (be specific here) and please help me to live a holy life today.

Thanksgiving Thank You, Father, for all the blessings you have given me (be specific here, too, by thanking God for your salvation, health, family, friends, church, material blessings, and other blessings). Remember everything you have is from Him.

Supplication Now you are ready to pray for specific needs in your life and in the lives of your loved ones.

I encourage you to keep a prayer journal so you can record your requests and God's answers. A simple spiral notebook will do just fine. Below is a picture of what my prayer journal looks like:

Requests

Answers

8-24 - Guide my steps this week. 8-30 - PTL!! You did!!

8-24 - Jeff's surgery Successful!! 8-25 - PTL!!

8-26 - Bob's salvation 8-26 PTL!!!!

* By the way, "PTL" stands for "Praise the Lord!!"

The advantage of keeping a prayer journal is two-fold:

1. It causes you to pray specifically.
2. It helps you to see how faithful God has been in answering your prayers. This will strengthen your faith tremendously.

As you grow in your relationship with God, the time you spend alone with Him will grow, too. To begin with, though, just spend a few minutes with God each day. You will find them to be the sweetest moments of your day!!

4. Be faithful in your church attendance

This one seems so obvious that I almost left it out. I mean, do people really need to be told to show up for the church services? Listen to how the Bible says it: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing" (Hebrews 10:25, NIV).

Evidently there were some in the early church who had stopped going to church. Perhaps their lives were just too busy. Perhaps their schedules were just too full. Perhaps they didn't like the preaching or the singing. Perhaps they thought church was boring. More than likely, though, their hearts had grown cold toward the Lord and these were just their excuses.

In two thousand years, not much has changed. Many Christians are not as faithful to corporate

worship as they used to be. It can happen gradually, slowly, and almost imperceptibly...but it can happen.

If you want to be a happy Christian, I strongly encourage you to go to church!! And don't just go on Sunday mornings. At First Baptist, there are multiple worship services each week. Go to as many of them as you possibly can. They are all different, but they are all wonderful opportunities to worship the Lord with other believers, learn from His Word, and bring honor to God by taking your church attendance seriously.

No, we are not saved by going to church. But if we are saved, we should want to go to church. King David said, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD'" (Psalm 122:1). May we share his enthusiasm about going to church to worship God. And may we be there each time those church bells ring!!

5. Get connected to a small group.

As important as it is to be in your place for the worship services, it is equally important that you get connected to a small-group Bible study class. In every church that I know anything about, there are a lot more people who attend the large-group worship services than there are who attend the small-group Bible study classes. This is sad because the small-group classes have so much to offer. Let me mention several reasons why you need to be involved in a small-group class:

- *This is where you get to know people.*

In the worship services, it is difficult to really get to know anybody. You sit next to different people every week and besides that, the preacher is always talking!! In a small-group class, though, it is different. In a small group you really get to know people. There is time for some fellowship and socializing. If you are looking for friends, you will find them in the small-group setting.

- *This is where you get "plugged into" the church.*

If you are not involved in a small group, you will soon feel "detached" from the church body. You will feel more like a spectator than a participator. And the reason is because the small groups are where the action is!! Small-group classes are frequently engaged in ministry projects, fellowships, and the like. It is through a small-group class that you really begin to feel like a part of the church family. The odds are that if you don't get involved in a small-group class, you will never really "stick" to the church.

- *These are the people who will help you when you have a need.*

If you become sick...if a family member becomes sick...if you lose your job...if there is a death in your family...if you just need to talk to somebody...who will be there to help you? Well, if you only go to the large-group worship services and fail to get connected to a small group, all

I can say is that I hope you sit beside the same person in church each week, because if you don't, nobody will even know that you have a need. But, if you are actively involved in a small group, people will know. Your entire group will know. It is like having a built-in support system. They will pray for you and they will help you in practical ways.

For these and many other reasons, I strongly encourage you to get connected to a small-group class. You may have to visit three or four classes before you find the one that just "feels right" to you. That is normal. All of the small-group classes are good, but there is one of them that has a chair with your name on it. So if you haven't found that class yet, get to work...it is out there waiting for your arrival. You need that small group and that small group needs you!!

6. Discover your place of service within the church.

When God saved you, He didn't do so just so that you could go to heaven when you die. If that were His only reason for saving you, He would have taken you to heaven the moment you were saved. But that didn't happen, did it? No, you are still on the earth and you are on the earth to serve God. The Bible says it this way: "For we are

His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

From cover to cover, the Bible is clear that we are not saved by our good works but for good works. We are saved by God’s grace and that happens when we place our faith in Christ. After we are saved, then God does intend for us to work. There are things He wants us to do for Him. We would be wise to discover what it is God wants us to do and then to devote our lives to doing it. In fact, serving God is so important that when we get to heaven we will serve Him there forever. The Bible says, referring to what we will do in heaven, “His servants shall serve Him” (Revelation 22:3).

Here at First Baptist, there are many ways to serve the Lord. You could serve in the Parking-Lot Ministry, the Greeters’ Ministry, the Children’s Ministry, the Student Ministry, the Music Ministry, the Media Ministry, the Prison Ministry, the Hospital Ministry, and on and on I could go.

The question is, “How do you know what God wants you to do?” In his book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, Rick Warren has given us an acrostic that helps us discover what our ministry for the Lord really is. Pastor Warren calls it our “SHAPE” and he says that by discovering our “SHAPE” we can discover what God wants us to do. Let’s think about your spiritual “SHAPE” for a moment:

Spiritual Gifts

Heart

Abilities

Personality

Experiences

Spiritual Gifts — What are your spiritual gifts? When the Holy Spirit came to live within you, He gave you at least one spiritual gift. We read about those gifts in Romans 12, I Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, and I Peter 4. The Bible says, “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another” (I Peter 4:10). He has given us spiritual gifts so that we can serve one another. The remaining four words in this acrostic will help you discover your spiritual gifts.

Heart — What are you passionate about? What do you have a heart for? If young children make you nervous and send you running the other way, it’s a pretty sure assumption that you don’t need to be in the Children’s Ministry. If, on the other hand, you have a passion for children to learn about God’s love at a young age, Children’s Ministry may be just the place for you.

Abilities — What are you good at? If you are good at speaking, you might be a good Bible teacher. If you are good at organizing things, perhaps you could organize a ministry project or a small-group class. If you are good with the computer and love the technical world, you might be a blessing to the Media Ministry.

Personality — Are you an introvert or an extrovert? If you are an introvert, you probably don’t need to be a greeter!! But perhaps you could serve behind the scenes on the Baptism Ministry Team.

Experience — What experiences do you bring to the table? God wants to use everything you’ve been through (the good, the bad, and the ugly) in His service.

I have a very good friend who for many years was addicted to drugs and alcohol. Those substances almost destroyed his life. Several years ago, though, he gave his life to Christ, was delivered from his addictions, and now leads our Recovery Ministry at the church. Now only God could do something like that!! Only God could completely free a person from such addictions and then open a door for him to begin a ministry that helps others who are fighting the same battle he once waged.

It may well be that the most difficult experiences of your life will become the most meaningful opportunities for service in the Kingdom of God. With God, no experience is ever wasted. He wants to use them all for His glory.

Discovering your place of service within the church may take a little time, but it is very important.

God has a plan for you and He will help you discover your spiritual “SHAPE.” Just be patient, remain open-minded, and follow the Holy Spirit’s leading in your life. Remember, He saved you so that you could serve Him!!

7. Become a giver.

One of the characteristics of a happy person is generosity. I have never known a selfish, stingy, tight person who is truly happy. As Christians, we have received so much from the Lord. We have received the forgiveness of our sins, eternal salvation, the indwelling Holy Spirit, loving families, caring friends, health, strength, and many, many material blessings. As the recipients of so many blessings, we need to learn to give as freely as we have received.

The first financial gift we should give should be our tithe. In the Hebrew language, the word “tithe” literally means “tenth.” The teaching of Scripture is that we should give to God the first 10% of our income. Before we pay our taxes, before we pay our bills, we need to pay our tithes.

God says, “‘Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you *such* blessing that *there will not be room enough to receive it*’” (Malachi 3:10).

This is the only place I know of in all the Bible where God says that we are to test Him. God is simply saying that if we will give Him the first 10% of our income, He will bless us so that we will be much better off than we would have been if we kept it all for ourselves.

God’s math is different from ours. God says: “*You will be better off with 90% of the money with My blessings than with 100% of the money on your own.*”

Some people think that tithing was just for Old Testament times, but that is not true. Jesus endorsed it in the New Testament. (See Matthew 23:23.) Tithing is God’s way of funding His work and it is one of God’s ways of blessing His people.

If you have never tithed, I encourage you to begin now. Perhaps you’re thinking, “There is no way I can tithe. I can’t even pay my bills.” Let me respectfully but honestly say that the reason you can’t pay your bills is because you’re not tithing. You’re trying to manage all the money on your own. You need to get God involved in your finances and the way to do that is to tithe. If you say that you cannot afford to tithe, let me say that you cannot afford not to tithe!!

God honors tithing because tithing honors God. And anytime we honor God, God honors us. God Himself said that “those who honor Me I will honor” (I Samuel 2:30).

Not only does God love givers, He loves happy givers. The Bible says, “God loves a cheerful giver” (II Corinthians 9:7). And so I encourage you to step out in faith and tithe. And when you write that check, write it with a smile...thanking God for His blessings and trusting Him to keep His promise to open the windows of heaven for you.

I want to live under an open heaven and I have a feeling that you do, too. So tithe, and trust God to take care of you!! He has promised to do so, and God never lies!!

8. Love one another.

One of the things that can make you an unhappy Christian is having bad feelings toward other people. Sadly, this seems to happen far too often in churches. Someone has well said that “bitterness is the acid that destroys its own container.” If you have bitter feelings toward someone, I encourage you to read this section carefully.

Bitterness begins when somebody does us wrong. When we have been hurt by what someone has

done or said, we are candidates for bitterness.

Now let's face it...we've all been hurt. The happy Christian has learned how to handle that hurt; the unhappy Christian hasn't. You can't be happy if you're still nursing old wounds. Those wounds need to heal and you need to have a heart free from bitterness and full of love. The question, of course, is... "How?"

The first step in being free from bitterness is to *see the Sovereign Hand of God in your situation*. That does not mean that God caused that person to hurt you...God would never do that...but it does mean that He allowed it. And if He allowed it, He allowed it to help you grow.

The second step is to *forgive the person immediately and unconditionally*. You don't wait for an apology...that may never come. You forgive them right now. You simply say to God, "Father, You know my pain. You know what has happened. But I can't keep living with these bitter feelings. You have forgiven me, and on the basis of Your forgiveness, I now forgive my offender. I release him into Your hands. I don't hold this against him anymore." My friend, if you will sincerely pray that prayer, you will find your soul set free!!

The third step is to begin to *pray for the person who has hurt you*. Ask God to lead them to repentance. Ask God to bless them. And ask God to give you an opportunity to do something kind for them. I have found that I cannot be angry with someone whom I am asking God to bless!!

Jesus said, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35). Life is too short to live it with anger. Whatever has happened, we need to deal with it before God and allow His grace to lead us on.

God will sometimes allow people into our lives who are difficult to love. Remember, this is only a test. He's just wanting to see if we will put into practice the biblical mandate to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

9. Walk in the Spirit.

If you and I are going to be happy people, we must remember where happiness comes from. Happiness does not come from other people. Happiness does not come from circumstances. Happiness does not even come from the church. Happiness...real happiness...can only be found in a living relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the One Who said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly" (John 10:10). Jesus Himself is the Source of our happiness.

If we are going to live the abundant life, we must learn to walk in the Spirit. We must learn to walk daily with Jesus, even though we cannot see Him. There are several things involved in walking in the Spirit. I certainly don't know everything about this subject, but I have learned some things that might be a blessing to you.

First, to walk in the Spirit we must *develop a conscious awareness of God's presence*. He has promised to be with us at all times (see Matthew 28:20). We need to talk to Jesus like we would talk to a friend. We need to go through the day with a conscious awareness of His presence. When we go to the grocery store, He is there. When we exercise, He is there. When we go to bed, while we sleep, when we wake up...He is there. We may have to work at reminding ourselves that no matter where we are, He is there, but that's okay. This growing awareness of Jesus' presence leads to unending conversation with Him and this is the first step to walking in the Spirit.

The second step to walking in the Spirit is to *trust Jesus at all times*. The apostle Paul said, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" (Colossians 2:6). How did we receive Christ? By faith. And that is precisely how we are to walk in Him.

I encourage you to trust Jesus with everything. If you think about it, if we are trusting Jesus to take us to heaven when we die, then surely we can trust Him to take care of us while we live. We need to trust Him with our families, our futures, our finances, our jobs, our health, and everything else in life. During the day, I frequently find myself saying, "I'm trusting You, Jesus." And I really am. And the result is a

tremendous peace in my heart.

The third step to walking in the Spirit is to *stay away from temptation*. Temptation leads to sin and sin prevents us from walking hand-in-hand with Jesus. I hate sin, and every time I sin, I hate it more. Sin drives a wedge between us and God. In short, sin takes the fun out of being saved.

I heard a little story that helps me at this point. A grandmother took her recently-saved grandson to church and the preacher preached about the Spirit-filled life. He discussed the battle between the Spirit and the flesh, but the little boy just didn't understand. After the service he asked his grandmother what all this talk about the old nature and the new nature was all about. She said, "Well, up here where we live we see a lot of wolves. And you can think of the two natures, the Spirit and the flesh, like two wolves. There is a good wolf and a bad wolf. Both wolves live inside of you. The good wolf wants you to do right, to be kind, to be pure, and to be honest. The bad wolf, on the other hand, wants you to do wrong, to be mean, to be immoral, and to lie. Both of these wolves are trying to gain the control of your life." Her grandson, fully engrossed in the story, said, "Well, Grandma, which wolf wins?" To which she wisely responded, "Whichever one you feed!!"

Now I like that story. I can relate to it. There are two natures in me. There is the Spirit and there is the flesh. The one I feed is the one who will win the control of my life. Our prayer should be, "Dear God, help me to feed the Spirit and starve the flesh." When we do that, we are well on our way to walking in the Spirit!!

10. Pray for your church each day.

If you want to be a happy Christian, I encourage you to pray for your church each day. Pray for God's hands of blessing to be upon the church. Pray for God's will to be done in the church. Pray for the pastor. Pray for the staff. Pray for others in the church. Pray that God would make our church like a spiritual magnet...so that the unsaved would be drawn to it through the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray that we could touch the world for Jesus from this corner on which we are located. It is no secret that God answers prayer and He will certainly answer your prayers for His church. God established the church. Jesus is the Head of the church. The Holy Spirit works in the church. And we would do well to pray daily for the church.

A Closing Word

I can assure you, based on the authority of God's Word, that if you will do the ten things outlined in this booklet you will be a happy Christian .

My prayer for you is the same as my prayer for myself...and that is that God would grow us up spiritually, that He would make us more and more like Jesus, and that He would use us to be a blessing to others. My prayer is that we would daily live the abundant life and that the fingerprint of God would be on every aspect of our lives.

Jon Redmond

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A graduate of Baylor University (B.A.), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (D. Min.), Jon's desire is to lead people to trust Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord and to help them grow in their relationship with Him.