

MAKE-UP OF A CHRISTAIN

By Braam Le Roux

What makes a good Christian? The more I thought about it, the longer the list became. You see, it is not easy to be a Christian, it takes hard work and dedication and love.

But the good news is that the longer we do it, the easier it becomes.

The real question is how dedicated are you really?

With my study this evening, I would like to encourage and motivate you. You know the old saying: “if the shoe fits wear it”..... well I would like to say: “if the shoe fits, then look for the other one so that you have two shoes that fit”.

All the characteristics of a good Christian can be summed up in one word. **LOVE**

Listen to the two most important laws of Christ:

Matt 19:18-19 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great commandment.

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Also in Galatians 5:14 For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

What makes a good Christian?

1. **Must study God's word.** (2 Tim 3:14-17) The only way we can know what God wants and expect from us is to study his word. It is the only way we will stop being babes in Christ.

In 1 Pet 3:17 Peter tells us that **we must grow in grace and knowledge**. How? By studying God's word
1 Pet 2:2 Peter tells the Christians to **crave spiritual milk so that they may grow in faith**

Spiritual milk? The word.

Faith? Believing in something you can't see. Once you see it, you don't have to believe anymore, as then it has already happened.

In the **O.T**, the basic meaning of faith (**emunah**) is **certainty** and **faithfulness**. 1 Sam 26:23

The Person to whom the **Levites, priests and heads of Israel** had to be faithful, was the Lord.

2 Chronicles 19: 8,9

As in the **marriage relationship**, faithfulness is not an option. In **Hosea 2:19-20**, Hosea portrays God's relationship to Israel as a marriage, and states God's promise of faithfulness.

In the **N.T**, faith (**pistis**) is a firm persuasion, a conviction based upon hearing. In the new testament, it is always used as faith in God or Christ, or things spiritual.

The Greek word for the noun is **pisteuo**, which has a distinct difference between faith in man and faith in God or Christ. It is a firm conviction, producing a full acknowledgement of God's revelation or truth.

Faith is inviting God's Holy Spirit to live within us. If God Himself is living within us, through the Holy Spirit, then our lives should be dramatically changed. God gives us the power to live in an entirely new way.

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WHY SHOULD WE HAVE FAITH?

HEBREWS 11:1-3

Faith gives us hope.

JOHN 5:24

Faith is the only way to get to heaven. It is the only doorway to eternal life. If God created eternity, then only through God can we get there.

MATTHEW 11:2-3

Many people in the Bible whom we consider to be “pillars of faith” had moments of doubt. The key is to never give up on our faith and to always ask if, over time, our lives have been moving closer to or further away from God. Even during moments of doubt, you must invest the effort and discipline to allow your faith to grow.

Ecl: 7:12 .. once you know the truth of God’s work and you obey it, you will be saved.
All the money in the world cannot save you.

2. Must be active for God. We must work for God

The N.T generally refers to ‘work’ as **work of faith**, as **doing everything for Christ’s sake**.
The Greek word for **work** is ‘**energeo**’, which means to be active and operative for God. 1 Cor 12:5-6

TEAMWORK

Have you ever watched a flock of geese flying in their traditional “V” formation? Two engineers learned that each bird, by flapping its wings, creates uplift for the bird that follows. Together, the whole flock gains something like 70% greater flying range than if they were journeying alone.

In 1 Cor 12:12-31 we read about the different body parts in the church of Christ....us. God arranged us exactly how He wanted us. Each one received our own special gift. God wants us to use that gift. You know what you can do, don’t be shy or hesitant, go for it. The more you do what you’ve set out to do, the easier it becomes. We need to be on guard to keep our priorities straight. Remain active in your service to God and continue to put first things first. Don’t wait for the next person to do something..... if you’re capable, jump in and do it.

A CHINESE PROVERB:

A single arrow is easily broken, but not ten in a bundle.

Thomas Jefferson said that whenever you do a thing, act as if the world is watching.
I say.... No matter what you do, do it as if God is watching you

Matt 28:18-20 Jesus tells us to go out and preach to the nation, teaching everybody the word of Christ.

3. Must be regular in church assemblies and studies. (Heb 10:24,25) King James version: **let us not forsake the assemblies of ourselves together, as the manner of some, but exhorting one another.**

Exhort = encourage one another or to comfort one another.

So apart from the fact that Christ instructed us to not forsake the assemblies, we also need it for our spiritual uplifting and comfort. As soon as someone starts missing services and studies, his or her faith will start to weaken.... It also becomes easier to stay at home. This is not what Christ wants for us. He knows what is good for us, that is probably why he said we need to be consistent in our attendance.

Different meaning of the word “Assemble”

O.T. the noun **Qahal** for assembly meant to gather or to assemble to plan or execute war. (the first of these assemblies was in **Gen 49:6**)

Also it was used for a gathering to judge or deliberate. First used in **Eze 23:45-47**. Here God said that the righteous men would assemble to judge the unrighteous.

It also sometimes signified a gathering of all the males of Israel who were eligible to bring sacrifices to the Lord. **Deut 23:1**

1. Assembly in the **NT** is **ekklesia**, which means “a calling out of” to discuss the affairs of the state. (**Acts 19:39**)
2. It also denotes the **whole assembly of all the Christians** at the time, as in which Christ said “**upon this rock I will build my church (Matt 16:18)** and which is further describes as the church of Christ. Christ purchased it with His blood (**Acts 20:28**)
3. It also means in a singular number, as a congregation, consisting of a body of believers. (**Matt 18:17**)
4. The Greek word **paneguris**, means any kind of assembly, where believers gather to honor God. (**Hebr 12:23**)

In other words, God wants us to get together as often as we can, especially when we are gathering to learn more about His word.

I gave you some examples of what the word “assembly” means throughout the bible. The most important thing is for us to remember that Christ said we must not forsake the assemblies of ourselves together,

- This is where we **bring honor** to God
- **encourage** one another
- **comfort** one another
- **learn** more about God’s word
- **remember what Jesus did for us**
- **strengthen our faith**

5. **WE MUST BE AN EXAMPLE TO OTHERS (I TIM 4:12)** Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Age has no bearing on whether we are capable of setting an example or not.

Everybody is a role model to **somebody else** and everybody **has a role model**.... someone he admires. Our personal presence not only influences others in matters of daily living, but also for good or evil, Christ or Satan. What kind of example have you been exhibiting lately to others?

EXODUS 23:24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images

I Pet 2:21 Peter said that Christ was an example for us.... A living example. He suffered, but remained faithful. So should we.

I’m not going into the full explanation of all the Greek words, but let’s rather look at some **characteristics of setting an example**.

TITUS 2 AND 3 teaches us how to be the kind of example people will want to follow. READ IT IN YOUR OWN TIME

WHO IS THE ULTIMATE ROLE MODEL?

1 CORINTHIANS 11:1

In other people, we find assorted characteristics we would like to follow. In Jesus Christ, we find all of the characteristics we would like to follow. When you have a question about what to do, ask what Jesus would have done.

IN WHAT WAYS CAN I BE A GOOD EXAMPLE?

A good role model is **responsible and accountable**. 1 THESSALONIANS 1:4-6

A good role model **not only does what is right but speaks out against wrong**. JEREMIAH 1:10

A good role model **teaches** others about God's ways. HEBREWS 5:12

Age need **not be a barrier** to being a good role model. 1 TIMOTHY 4:12

A good role model **influences others** for good rather than being easily influenced by evil. MATTHEW 5:13

Being a good role model **doesn't mean** you are **perfect**, but that you are striving for **maturity**. HOSEA 6:3

Being a good role model **doesn't make you a celebrity; it makes you a servant**. MATTHEW 20:28

6. WE MUST PUT GOD FIRST

We need to make our plans around our commitments for God. We need to keep our focus on God. I know it's not always possible, but we need to make every possible effort to do it. We need to keep our focus on Christ in everything we do.

7. FIGHT SIN (Rom 6:1-2)

If you know you have a sinful weakness, fight it. Pray. If you are really sincere about giving up your sinful weakness, and you pray, believe me, God will help you. The secret there is that you really want to do it.

Buying a lotto ticket..... you can't win, unless you buy a ticket.

Rom 6:6-23 tells us that we need to fight sin..... **Paul** tells us that sin is like a power working through our body. The more it gets hold of us, the easier it is to give in to sin.

Verse 12 **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.**

You can sin a once off sin, like taking something that doesn't belong to you, or a continuous sin, like swearing often.

We can sin against **another person** (I Cor 8:12),
against a **fellow Christian** (Matt 18:15),
against **Christ** (Matt 27:4)
or against **your own body** (I Cor 6:16-20).

Sin breaks our relationship with God because it is rebellion against God. A holy God cannot live with unholy people. But when we accept Jesus as Savior and ask him to forgive our sins, this simple act of faith makes us righteous in God's sight. **ROMANS 3:23-25**

What is the only sin that cannot be forgiven and why?

Matt 12:31-32 **blasphemy against the Holy Spirit** is unforgivable. If you reject Christ and you die, then you cannot be saved.

Suicide? When you commit suicide, you commit sin, therefore, you cannot repent, as you are dead, so your soul will be lost forever.

Are there degrees in sin? Are there big or small sins?

Yes, I believe there are. Jesus said in **John 19:11** that the one who has delivered Him has committed the greater sin. The **religious leaders and Judas**, who delivered Jesus to death, committed a greater sin than **Pilate**, who allowed Jesus to be crucified.

Even in the OT, there was a difference between murder and manslaughter.

Why do we need to fight sin? Because sin separates us from God.

At the day of judgment, two things will happen:

- a. if your name is not found in the book of life, you will be condemned to hell
- b. then you will be judged according to the book of works, which will determine the individual's punishment in hell (Rev 20:12)

Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The good news is that if you are baptized into Christ for the remission of your sins and you remain faithful, then you will be saved. (Acts 2:38)

You need to confess your sins to Christ, and you need to apply the principles of this lesson to your life.

8. WE MUST BE IN CONTROL OF OUR EMOTIONS:

I gave a study before on controlling anger, so I'm not going to stay too long on this subject. I'm sure you'll all agree that although we all have some good emotions and some bad emotions, it is mainly the bad emotions that we need to control.

How can we be rational or helpful when we are angry and shouting and saying things that are not things we would like to hear ourselves?

There are so many bad things associated with anger, that is why I did a complete lesson on it. Let's just look at a couple of verses on anger and its effect.

A short-tempered man is a fool. Ecclesiastes 7:9,

Proverbs 19:11, and 16:32, TLB. "Don't be quick-tempered—that is being a fool."

"A wise man restrains his anger and overlooks insults. This is to his credit."

"It is better to be slow-tempered than famous; it is better to have self-control than to control an army."

It is better to be patient than powerful; it is better to have self-control than to conquer a city.

Get over anger quickly., **Ephesians 4:26-27**, TLB. "**If you are angry, don't sin by nursing your grudge. Don't let the sun go down with you still angry—get over it quickly; For when you are angry you give a mighty foothold to the devil.**"

Don't fight back when wronged., **1 Peter 3:9**, TLB "**Don't repay evil for evil. Don't snap back at those who say unkind things about you. Instead, pray for God's help for them, for we are to be kind to others, and God will bless us for it.**"

Anger produces strife. **Proverbs 30:33**, NIV. "**For as churning the milk produces butter, and as twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife.**"

8. MUST PRAY OFTEN

We need to pray often. Jesus prayed often. In Matt 26:41 Jesus told His disciples to pray so that they will not fall into temptation. Prayer is powerful. But remember to be careful of what you ask for..... you may just get it! You may not get it immediately, or in the way you would like to get it, but if it is for God's benefit, you will get it.

In I Thess 5:17-18, we are told to **Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks:** for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Does God answer prayers? Matt 7:7 / John 14:14 ASK, AND IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU
James 4:3 Only ask in God's favor, not in our own greediness.

9. MUST NOT GOSSIP, BUT RATHER EXAMINE OURSELVES

Christ came to humble us, let there not be among us a spirit of pride.

We must be severe upon our own faults, and quick in observing our own defects, but ready to make favourable allowances for others.

We need to be kind to each other

We need to have good words for each other, not always talk about the bad in others.

Neither inward nor outward peace can be enjoyed, without lowliness of mind.

Phil 2: 1 onwards: Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? ²Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose.

³Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. ⁴Don't think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.

⁵Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. ⁶Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. ⁷He made himself nothing; ⁸he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. ⁹And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. ¹⁰Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, ¹¹so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹²and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

10. MUST BE DEDICATED.

I covered this in the fact that we must be regular in assemblies and church gatherings. If you are dedicated, you will want to be wherever the Christians meet.

About 80 years after the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel, Ezra returned to Judah with about 2,000 men and their families. He was given a letter from Artaxerxes instructing him to carry out a program of religious education. Along with the letter came significant power. But long before Ezra's mission began, God had shaped him in three important ways so that he would use the power well. First, as a scribe, Ezra dedicated himself to carefully studying God's Word. Second, he intended to apply and obey personally the commands he discovered in God's Word. Third, he was committed to teaching others God's Word and its application to life.

Knowing Ezra's priorities, it is not surprising to note his actions when he arrived in Jerusalem. The

Gideon was surprised by what God told him to do. He did not want to jump into a task for which he was ill prepared. The angel had to overcome three objections before Gideon was convinced: (1) Gideon's feelings of responsibility for his family's welfare, (2) his doubts about the call itself, and (3) his feelings of inadequacy for the job. Once Gideon was convinced, however, he obeyed with zest, resourcefulness, and speed. He dedicated those personality traits to God, with whom he was now personally acquainted.

Gideon had his weak moments and failures, but he was still God's servant. If you can easily relate to Gideon's weakness, can you also see yourself being willing to serve? Remember Gideon as a man who obeyed God by giving his attention to the task at hand. Then give your full attention to believing God will prepare you for tomorrow when it comes.

11. MUST BE FAITHFUL

12. MUST LOVE

Must love God, one another and your enemies..... love everyone
Check my opening statement of this study.... About love

13. MUST BE OBEDIENT (TO God)

Also to the leaders?

14. MUST BE FORGIVING

15. MUST BE PATIENT

16. MUST BE KIND

17. MUST HAVE AN ACTIVE DESIRE TO BE MORE CHRISTLIKE

18. MUST HAVE AN ACTIVE DESIRE TO BE A DISCIPLE

19.