



# CrossTraining 4

## Christian Living

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week 1



**Christian:** (adj) literally “little Christ”; a person who believes that Messiah Jesus is God, the Son, who died for the sins of the world and rose from the dead on the third day and that only through faith in him can anyone be saved.

**Living:** (n) the attitudes and actions of one’s daily existence and how these affect the quality of one’s relationships with others.

**Question:** what difference does the adjective *Christian* make on the noun *living*? \_\_\_\_\_

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*“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude” (Col 2:6-7) NASB.*

We are saved at the foot of the cross. From this starting point of our salvation, where do we go from here in order to live the Christian life? Only as far as the empty tomb! Romans 6:4 states *that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.* Jesus’ life is our model for living but we need more than a good example, we need to be forgiven, we need new hearts and the power of God to transform our lives, so that we *can* follow Jesus’ example! Jesus’ death and resurrection, the cross and the empty tomb, uniquely provide for our desperate spiritual need—for our salvation and our sanctification. From beginning to end, the Christian life is solidly focused on Jesus.

*“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2).*

*“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2Cor 5:15).*

There is a hymn that goes, “Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to Thee.” But if many were to honestly sing that hymn, they would have to change the words to “Take His life and let me be.”

So again we ask the question:

**What difference does the gospel make in your lifestyle**—your values, beliefs, priorities, actions, initiatives and responses in life. How you relate to your boss, how you do your work, how you treat your spouse and raise your children, how you spend your money, how you spend your time, how does the gospel affect your phobias, how your view yourself, how you view rich people and poor people, popular people and awkward people? This is not a rhetorical question:

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# Living the Christian Life By Grace



## The Gospel

1. (n) good news
2. (n) the core of Jesus' message and that of his apostles: that salvation from the eternal penalty and abiding power of sin is offered to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, his sacrificial death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead and that through repentance the believer is given peace with God as a member of His eternal kingdom. Also called "the gospel of God's grace" (Acts 20:24), "the gospel of God" (Rom 1:1), "the gospel of Christ" (Php 1:27), "the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15).

The same good news that brought your salvation, also continues your salvation, the same grace that purchased forgiveness for you, also promises to transform you in this life and glorify you in the next. God's grace doesn't just save you, it sanctifies you, it gives you hope when your situation is hopeless; God's grace gives you peace when your life is in turmoil; it fills you with love when you are hurt, joy when your plans are frustrated; God grace motivates you to turn from sin and embrace the Lord. His grace beckons you to pray, it brings you to your knees in humility and lifts up your head in celebration. God's grace brings to memory a Bible verse to speak just at your point of need, or a Christian brother or sister to help you along the way. God's grace brings you into a life that is on mission with God in this world, a life of purpose, of promise and of eternal reward!

*"For the **grace of God** that brings salvation has appeared to all men. **It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good**" (Titus 2:11-14).*

*"Continue to **work out** your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who **works in** you to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Php 2:12-13).*

Pastor Jeff Williams gives the best illustration I have heard on this passage: in order to really clean your shower, you need to use some sort of scrubbing bubbles solution that **works into** the mildew to loosen it and kill it so when your arm **works out** your scrubbing action, the tiles again look just as they were meant to look. All of your hardest efforts without those bubbles simply leaves you tired and frustrated and with a dirty shower. The bubbles do the work, but all that loosened, dead mildew just stays right there unless you cooperate with their efforts. So it is with the Holy Spirit working in the life of the believer as we work out our salvation.

## Grace—Theologically Speaking:

1. God is holy in His goodness—moral excellence
2. God created mankind in His image—we were designed to share his moral excellence as we live in fellowship with Him.
3. God gave mankind His Law to set apart His people for moral excellence and provide a means for relating to Him through worship.
4. When mankind sinned, it brought guilt and dysfunction.
5. Jesus the Christ is fully God and fully human—in Adam and Jesus, the second Adam, we see that sin is an abnormality to the human race.
6. Jesus' death on the cross satisfied God's just Law, while extending God's gracious love to mankind.
7. Through faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, the merit of Christ's shed blood acquits the believer of his/her guilt before God.
8. Through that same faith and by that same grace, God fills the believer with His Holy Spirit to transform him/her from dysfunction back to the image of God; this is sanctification, to be made holy, which is to become like Jesus.
9. The Christian life is a supernatural work, with the Holy Spirit working within the believer and the believer actively yielding to the Spirit's control by faith and obedience.
10. The Christian life, which is the Christ-like life, is characterized by living faith in God's promises, active love for God and others, and joy-filled hope in our full, final and complete salvation at our Lord's coming.

## The “Normal Christian Life”

“Average is not necessarily normal. For example, the average temperature of patients in a hospital may be 100 degrees, but such a temperature is not normal. The average score for a group of friends on the golf course may be 85 for the day, but par may be only 72. So it is with the Christian life. The average experience of church members is far different from New Testament norms for the Christian life. The normal Christian is characterized by loving responses to ingratitude and indifference, even hostility, and is filled with joy in the midst of unhappy circumstances and with peace when everything goes wrong. The normal Christian overcomes in the battle with temptation, consistently obeys the laws of God, and grows in self-control, contentment, humility, and courage.”<sup>1</sup>

“But what is the average Christian experience? Many church members typically think and behave very much like morally upright non-Christians. They are decent enough, but there is nothing supernatural about them. Their behavior is quite explainable in terms of heredity, early environment, and present circumstances.”—Robertson McQuilkin.

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<sup>1</sup> Robertson McQuilkin, *Five Views of Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1987), 151.

“Spirit-fullness is commanded—‘Be filled’ (Eph 5:18). This is not an option; it is an obligation. Not to be filled is to live in disobedience, and disobedience is sin (see James 4:17). Spirit-fullness is not a higher life or a deeper life; it is the normal Christian life—in dependence on the Lord and obedience to the Word.”—Stephen Olford.

“The normal experience would be for a person to experience the full blessings of life in Christ from the moment of salvation. But most Christians through ignorance, drift, or rebellion forfeit that close relationship and need another encounter of surrender and faith to restore what had been theirs by right all along.”—Robertson McQuilkin.

“Though it is not possible to live a sinless life, it is possible in the power of the Spirit to live a life of glorious victory over temptation and of growth toward ever greater likeness to Jesus.”—*Ibid.*

## Week 1 Homework

✝ Practice your memory verse: **Ephesians 5:1-2**

✝ Read Schwarz, pp. 264-267 (We will be reading all of chapters 9 & 10 in this class should you desire to read ahead on certain weeks).

✝ Read the paragraphs under “The Normal Christian Life” above. How would you describe your response to the above quotes?

pretty skeptical      fairly discouraged      quite hopeful      other

✝ Read through again the *italicized* Bible verses in this handout. Which one most challenges your view of the Christian life? Why and how does it challenge you?