



Living the Christian Life by Faith

The Standard: What does God expect, in fact, command of Christians?

- ✓ “Be imitators of God” (Eph 5:1).
- ✓ “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (1 Jn 2:6).
- ✓ “But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do” (1 Pet 1:15).
- ✓ “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48).

The Means: How can we meet those standards?

- 1) **Formalism:** Interpret God’s standards as purely outward conformity? NO!
“Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires” (Gal 5:24).
- 2) **Legalism:** With strong determination, will power and self-discipline? NO!
“Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?” (Gal 3:2-3).
- 3) **Fatalism:** Do my best, but know it can’t be done? NO!
“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3).
- 4) **Faith:** By God’s grace, through our faith? YES!
“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).

What is Biblical Faith?

When you converted to Christ, you surrendered to Christ’s lordship and you believed his promise that he would forgive your sins and secure a place in heaven for you. This promise was based upon his death and resurrection which compelled you to accept it and Him.

Faith is our response to God’s grace. It is how we cooperate with God’s initiative and efforts to bring us into fellowship with himself (salvation) and conform us to his Son (sanctification). Our cooperation runs on the two tracks of:

- repentance and faith
- yield and trust
- Rely Obey Trust Cling

Yield
to His lordship

Obey
His commands

Trust
in His promises

Where does **love** fit into the process shown in this diagram?

We yield to God's love when we trust in Christ; God's promises are a love gift. Jesus said that if we love him we will obey his commands and that his top command is to love!

How does **conforming** to Jesus Christ fit into this process?

Jesus did all of these things perfectly. He yielded to His Father's will, trusted in His promises and obeyed His commands, even to the cross.

Promises to Rely upon, Trust in, and Cling to:

"The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged" (Dt 31:8).

"So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt 6:31-33).

"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord" (Rom 12:19).

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php 1:6).

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing....If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you" (Jn 15:5,7).

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him" (1Jn 5:14-15).

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1Cor 10:13).

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am" (Jn 14:1-3).

2 Peter 1:2-11

[2] Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

[3] **His divine power has given us everything we need** for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

[4] Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

[5] For this very reason, **make every effort** to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; [6] and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; [7] and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

[8] For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[9] But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.

[10] Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For **if you do these things, you will never fall**, [11] and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

vv 2,3,8 *knowledge*
= true and precise understanding.

2-3: God provides grace and power; we can use it by rightly knowing God

4-5: God's promises are the only things we can confidently believe and base our lives on

5: transitions from what God has already provided to now what we do in response—*make every effort*, because we know our efforts are worthwhile...

The goal will be reached!

Spiraling Up-Not Down: Robertson McQuilkin in his workbook *Life in the Spirit* describes our cooperation in this way:

“When we make the big turnaround, yielding to God’s will and trusting Him to work, the Holy Spirit begins to change us. We become more like Jesus in our attitudes, in our view of things, in our goals and ambitions, in our responses and behavior. Consequently, we get closer and closer to Him in daily companionship (2Cor 3:18). The more we know Him, the more we love Him; the more we love Him, the more we want to be with Him; the more we’re with Him the more we want to be like Him; the more we change to be like Him, the better we know Him, the more we love Him—the spiral continues toward likeness to Christ and a greater love relationship with God.”

Does this describe your life right now?

If not, where in the process does the most change need to happen?

