

LIVING FOR JESUS



By
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Please open your Bibles to II Corinthians chapter five and verse fifteen. I would like to preach a message entitled "Living for Jesus." By way of introduction, let me say this: God did not save you that you might live for yourself and do what you want to do. The Bible is very clear on this. In II Corinthians 5:15, the Bible says, "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." That is one of the clearest passages in all the Word of God which shows that God did not save you that you might live for yourself and do what you want to do, but that you might live for Christ.

In Romans 6:6, the Bible says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." You ought not to be serving the old sin nature that you have that you were born with. You ought to be serving the Master. You ought to be serving the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you are serving the Lord you ought to live in such a way that you can say, "I know my life is well-pleasing to God. I know my life is well-pleasing in God's sight."

Brethren, you are not going to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ unashamed by accident. If you stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ unashamed, it will be because, at some point in your Christian life, you have determined that is exactly how you are going to stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Living for Christ and doing what is right does not happen by accident. It will only happen as you determine by God's grace that is exactly what you are going to do.

I want you to consider this matter of living for Christ and doing what is right on purpose.

The reason some of you don't have devotions, don't tithe, don't attend church regularly, don't go to church visitation, don't get involved in soul winning, is that it never seems to work into your schedule.

Righteousness rarely ever works out in your schedule. It is usually inconvenient to do right. If you are going to do what you ought to do, you need to do it on purpose.

Let me ask you something. Do you live your life by chance? Do you get up on Sunday and say, "I wonder how this week is going to turn out; I wonder if I am going to live for God and do what is right this week"?

You don't have to live that way. We are going to notice several things. Number one, you need to decide to live for Christ and do what is right; number two, you need to discipline yourself to do what you have decided; and then number three, you need to depend upon the Holy Spirit of God.

Please notice, number one, you need to decide to live for God and do what is right; and that's not going to happen by accident. You don't just wake up one morning and find out that your life has been well-pleasing to God. It doesn't happen that way. You need to make a conscious and deliberate decision to live for Christ and do what is right. I have made up my mind. I have decided. I am going to live for Christ and do what is right.

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to decide that. You need to decide to live for Christ and do what is right.

In Romans 6:11-13, the Bible says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." That's a decision!

In Romans 12:1-2, the Bible says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." That's a decision!

In I Corinthians 6:19-20, the Bible says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." That's a decision!

In II Corinthians 5:15, the Bible says, "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." That's a decision!

Question! Have you decided to live for Christ and do what is right? Is it settled? If a problem comes up in your life, do you have to decide all over again that you are going to live for Christ? That you are going to do what is right? Many Christians act that way today. They have the general notion that they are generally going to live for Christ and do what is right. But in every situation, it is always up in the air. If that's the way you're living your Christian life today, you probably will be a failure in life. But If you will make a conscious and deliberate decision, by God's grace, in every situation, in every instance, that you are going to live for Christ, that you are going to do what is right, that you are going to come down on God's side, if you make that decision, mark it down, you will be well-pleasing to God when you face Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Let me ask you something! Have you decided to live for Christ? Have you decided to do what is right? Is it a settled matter with you? Or is it still up in the air? Have you purposed in your heart to go to church every day the doors are

open? Have you decided that? Have you purposed in your heart to read the Word of God every day? Have you decided that? Have you purposed in your heart to pray every day? Have you decided that? Have you purposed in your heart to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ every day? Have you decided that? Have you purposed in your heart to have devotions and quiet time with the Lord every day? Have you decided that?

Listen folks! Doing all these things is not the result of a sermon. It is the result of a simple decision on your part that that is what you are going to do. Don't you see that?

Have you decided that you are going to tithe? You say, "Preacher! I will begin to tithe when I can afford it." My dear Christian friend! You will never be able to afford it. You will only tithe when you say, "I have decided that is the right thing to do. Therefore, I am going to tithe."

Have you decided that you are going to be in church? I am going to be there in Sunday school, on Sunday morning and Sunday night, and on Wednesday night. You say, "Preacher! I will be there if I can." Then I can tell you right now, there is going to be a whole lot of times you cannot. Listen! Those that come to church faithfully come to church faithfully because, at some point in their lives, they have decided that is how they are going to live their lives.

Are you going to be a loving husband? You are not going to be one by accident. You are only going to be a loving husband when you decide that is how you are going to live.

Are you going to be a submissive wife? You are not going to be one by accident. You are only going to be a submissive wife when you decide that is how you are going to live.

Are you going to be an obedient child in the home? You are not going to be one by accident. You are only going to be an obedient child in the home when you decide that is how you are going to live.

You are not going to live for Christ and do what is right without making these types of decisions. The successful Christian life is made one decision after another. It does not happen any other way. If you think living for Christ and doing what is right is done any other way, you are simply fooling yourself. There has to be a decision. There has to be determination.

You need to say something like this: I am going to live for Jesus Christ and do what is right. It is going to affect the way I think. It is going to affect the way I talk. It is going to affect the way I dress. It is going to affect the way I live. It is going to affect everything about me. That is, I have decided, I have made up my mind that I am going to live for Christ and do what is right.

Now that you have decided that, you need to realize that deciding to do this is not the end of the battle. But there will be no success where there is no decision. There will be no success where there is no determination.

You say, "Preacher! I am not always sure what's right." But that is why God gave you the Bible. In Psalm 32:8, the Bible says, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go." In Psalm 37:23, the Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD." In Psalm 119:9, the Bible says, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." In Psalm 119:11, it says, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." In Psalm 119:105, the Word of God says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." In James 1:5, the Bible says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." In I Peter 2:2, it says, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." In II Timothy 3:16-17, the Bible says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

The reason some of you have not made a solid decision is that you have not connected those decisions with the Word of God. What you need to do is get in the Word of God and find out what you ought to be doing.

You need to come to that place in your life where you say, "I ought to go to church on Wednesday night because the Bible says I ought to go. I ought to be involved in soul winning because the Bible says I should be involved in soul winning." You need to decide that. You need to decide that whatever God says, that is exactly what you are going to do.

We have noticed, number one: that you need to decide to live for Christ and do what is right; but notice, number two: you need to discipline yourself to do what you have decided.

Are you going to do what you are supposed to do because you are supposed to do it, because it is a right decision, because it is the right thing to do? In I Thessalonians 5:21, the Bible says, "Hold fast that which is good."

As a child of God, you need to come to a settled decision in your life that you are going to live for Christ and do what is right; and once you have decided that, you need to discipline yourself to do what you have decided, regardless of the circumstances, regardless of the situations.

Here is where you really take hold of yourself. The Bible calls it temperance. Temperance in the New Testament always means self-discipline or self-control. And the Bible teaches that discipline or temperance is a fruit of the Spirit of God. In I Corinthians 9:27, Paul said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." What was Paul saying? He was simply saying this: I tell my body what to do, and I don't let my body tell me what to do.

In Proverbs 16:32, the Bible says, "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." What is the Bible saying? It is simply saying this: You are to have control over your own spirit.

In Proverbs 25:28, the Bible says, "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." What is the Bible saying? It is simply saying this: You are to have rule over your own spirit. You say, "Preacher! I have decided I am going to live for Christ. Now I am home free." No, you are not. Upon that decision there must come discipline, self-discipline. That is, you need to require yourself to do what is right.

Now, discipline involves several things. It involves learning and developing new habits. The problem with most Christians today is that they have bad habits. They have bad reading habits. They have bad writing habits. They have bad study habits. They have all kinds of bad habits. Another problem with most Christians today is that they don't want it to cost them anything to do right. They don't want to pay the price to do right. They don't want to make the sacrifice in this life to do what is right. They don't want to discipline themselves to do what is right.

Doing what is right does not come naturally. You say, "Preacher! I have decided that I am going to go to church. It is the right thing to do. Now I am home free. It will just come naturally." No, it will not.

"I have decided that I am going to have devotions every day. It is the right thing to do. The Word of God demands it. The Word of God requires it. It is the right thing to do. I have decided I am going to do it. Now the hard part is over. The hard part is past." No, it is not. It is carried out when you learn new habits. It is carried out when you discipline yourself to do what you are supposed to do.

You don't have devotions naturally. If you do have devotions, you will have to go against the old nature. Don't you see that? By nature you want to miss church. On the human side you don't do what is right. You naturally do what is wrong. You have to learn how to do right; and if you are going to learn how to do the right thing, you are going to have to require yourself and discipline yourself every day to do what you are supposed to do. It is that simple.

You say, "Preacher! What if I do not feel like it?" Do it anyway. "What if I am not encouraged to do it?" Do it anyway. Do what is right because it is right to do right. Do what you are supposed to do because you are supposed to do it.

Listen! If you can do what you are supposed to do because you are supposed to do it, it won't be hard to do right.

Do you know why you ought to come to church? You say, "Because I feel good." No, sir! You ought to come to church because it is the right thing to do. Why should you come to church on Wednesday night? You say, "Because I have the time." No, Sir! You ought to come to church Wednesday night because it is the right thing to do. In Hebrews 10:24-25, the Bible says, "And let us consider one another

to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Why should you get involved in the outreach ministry of your local church? Why should you try to win men, women, boys, girls, and teenagers to Jesus Christ? Because it is the right thing to do. In Mark 16:15, the Bible says, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Why should you tithe? You say, “Because the church needs the money.” No, sir! You should tithe because it is the right thing to do. In Malachi 3:8, the Bible says, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.”

If you are going to do what is right, you need to decide to do right; and once you have decided to do right, you need to discipline yourself to do what you ought to do. Don’t let circumstances tell you what to do. Don’t let situations tell you what to do. You need to do what you ought to do because you ought to do it.

We have noticed, number one: that you need to decide to live for Christ and do what is right; then we noticed, number two: you need to discipline yourself to do what you have decided; but notice, number three: you need to depend upon the Holy Spirit of God.

Don’t think that living for God and doing what is right can only be done by the strong willed. There is no replacing of self-discipline. God will not do for you what you could do for yourself, and He won’t do for you because you have no character.

God will not physically pick you up and throw you into your car and drive you to church. He won’t do that.

The Holy Spirit of God will not wake you up and put you in a chair and open the Bible and say read this. He won’t do that.

If you don’t have enough character, if you don’t have enough discipline to do that, He won’t do it for you.

However! If you will make that decision to live for Christ and do what is right and then discipline yourself to do what you have decided, the Holy Spirit of God will help you in that moment of discipline and empower you to do His will. In Zechariah 4:6, the Bible says, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.” In Philippians 4:13, the Bible says, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Don’t you see that, my friend? Both the Holy Spirit of God and discipline work together. Discipline for the child of God is not an act of the flesh. But it is the product of the Holy Spirit of God working in you.

Brethren! You find me a Christian who is filled with the Spirit, and I will show you a Christian who is well disciplined. You find me a Christian who is right with God, and I will show you a Christian who is in charge and in control of his life. He does not live by the passions of the flesh. He does not live by the crisis of the hour. He lives by the Word of God. He lives by the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God indwelling in him.

You ought to depend upon the Holy Spirit of God because He is able to help you do those things that you ought to do.

As a child of God, you need to be right with the Holy Spirit of God so He can help you do those things you ought to do.

Don't grieve Him by sin. Don't quench Him by prolonged sin. And don't go on in your sins. In Proverbs 28:13, the Bible says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

You say, Preacher! What must I do? You need to confess and forsake all known sin in your life. In I John 1:9, the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

There is no reason why you cannot decide you are going to live for Christ and do what is right. You can do that. You may not be able to sing real pretty. But you can decide to live for Christ and do what is right; and once you have decided that, you can discipline yourself to do what you ought to do.

You can say, "I am going to go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Wednesday night because it is the right thing to do. I am going to read the Word of God every day because it is the right thing to do. I am going to keep my mouth clean because it is the right thing to do. I am going to keep my mind pure before God because it is the right thing to do. I am going to make the right kind of friends because it is the right thing to do." You can do that. You can decide to live for Christ and do what is right. You can depend upon the Holy Spirit of God to help you do what you have decided.

As a child of God, you can lean upon the Holy Spirit of God as other Christians do. You can have what they have.

All you need to do is make that decision to live for Christ and do what is right and then discipline yourself to do what you have decided and depend upon the Holy Spirit of God to help you.

Question! Have you made the decision to live for Christ and do what is right? I hope that you have. If not, I hope that you will make that decision today.

How is a Person Saved?

Salvation is all of God. God does the saving. Just take God at His Word and claim His salvation by faith. You will never be able to work your way into heaven. God does not have a scale in heaven whereby He weighs your good and bad works. That is a lie of the Devil – Romans 3:24; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18; Romans 5:8.

Salvation is as simple as believing on Christ as the one who bore your sin, who died in your place, who was buried, and whom God resurrected from the dead – John 1:12, 3:16, 6:47; Acts 16:31; II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 10:9-10; Romans 10:13.

Simply admit that you are a sinner and believe on Christ as your crucified, buried, and risen Saviour. You will receive forgiveness for all of your sins. You will receive His free gift of eternal life by faith – Romans 3:10, 23; I Corinthians 15:3-4.

Jesus did a wonderful thing for you some 2,000 years ago on Calvary's cross. He died for you. He was buried for you. He rose again the third day for you, and nothing would thrill Him more than to save you today.

Won't you go to Him right now in prayer and tell Him in your own words that you will trust Him as your Saviour? Or pray this simple prayer: Dear Lord, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died for me and that He arose from the grave. Here and now I ask You to forgive me of my sin and save me. In Jesus's name. Amen.

If you prayed that simple prayer, I would like to hear from you. Please contact me by e-mail or phone (813) 760-4028.

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