

## You Can: Introduction

### Part 1-- Christianity is impossible to do right.

Xianity is usually presented as what you should and shouldn't do if you want to make God happy with you. This type of religion only creates overbearing rules, unrealistic expectations, guilt and fear. But the life Jesus offers isn't about what you should do or cannot do. It's about **who you CAN BE and what you CAN DO**. If you've ever wondered if you could truly live the life you were made to live... Jesus answers, "You can."

**WE:** Have you ever TRIED to be a good Christian? Found living the Christian life to be difficult? Up and down experience? Not all it was hyped up to be? Maybe even seems unattainable to you. Or- religion you were exposed to turned you off big time?

Perhaps that's because Xianity is often presented as "What you should do."

### **Christianity is often presented as "What you should do."**

All man's religions are the same- they are all spelled "DO." About what you should do or not do. Rule following. We may try to keep the rules, but often find it difficult if not impossible. Ever feel hemmed in, stifled, controlled and that you just want to find the way out?

If you have been frustrated trying to be a good Christian, perhaps this is why. I'll say right here- BEING a Christian isn't just difficult or frustrating, it's down right impossible. You cannot BE a Christian on your own. It's impossible to live the Christian life on your own. No one ever lived the perfect Christian life other than Jesus Himself.

But here's the good news- Jesus did live the perfect life, He never sinned, never displeased His Father in heaven. He died on the cross to pay the penalty due our sins and rose again to give us eternal life. And he offers it as a gift- free gift. You cannot earn it through self-effort, good works, self-improvement. It is the gift of God.

Christianity is not like other religions.

### **Following Jesus is not about what you should or should not do, rather it is about WHO you can be.**

Have you ever TRIED to be a good Christian? We don't develop this new life by being good, turning over a new leaf, improving the way we behave. We don't develop this new life in Jesus, we accept it.

It's not about what we can do or cannot do, rather it is about who we are. It's not a new set of rules we follow, it's a new identity we accept and follow. For the one who has received eternal life, it's really a matter of **becoming who we already are in Jesus.**

In his letter to the JF in Corinth Paul told them they were now new creatures. And this is who you are if you have trusted Jesus as your savior...

**2 Cor 5:17 --**

**When you come to Jesus, you become a new person.**

When we come to Jesus, He doesn't try to improve the old person, He makes us into a brand new one. And He gives us a purposeful, full and meaningful life that starts now and lasts for all of eternity.

But, are we living like the new creation, the new person He has made us to be? Are we experiencing and enjoying this new life Jesus offers?" And if not, "What can we do about it?"

**GOD:** This is the issue Paul deals with in his letter to the JF's in the city of Ephesus. He explains how they can live free from the old way of life without Jesus and live like the new creatures He made them to be.

His words are as helpful and impactful for us today as they were in his own time.

Many of the JF in Ephesus were living like those who did not know Jesus.

**Eph 4:17-19-**

JF were Walking like the "Gentiles" (unbelievers) "in the futility of their mind, darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart..."

Paul encourages them to stop- "Walk no longer as the Gentiles also walk..."

He says it's a head problem, stemming from the futility of their mind.

**v.19-**

"Futility of the mind?" Useless/ineffective thinking. He describes it as darkened understanding, godlessness, ignorance of the things of God, because of "the hardness of their heart."

Hard hearts are hearts that are not open to God, they are resistant to the spiritual life He wants to give them. Consequently, they are a law unto themselves with no solid moral or ethical guidelines giving themselves over to sensuality and every kind of impurity with greediness- they can't get enough!

It's a bleak picture. But it's not just them, those without God, who can fall into this futile way of thinking and living. Paul is writing to JF and he says, v.17- "So this I say, and affirm with the Lord, that YOU WALK NO LONGER as the Gentiles also walk in the futility of their minds..."

But remember what Paul said to the Ephesians earlier...

Jesus followers are "New creatures!"

If we are a new creation in Jesus, why do we still struggle with the old life? It's that old way of futile, destructive thinking, and it keeps us from becoming all God has created us to be. It's the lingering influence of years of practice in the life without God, before the change that keeps us going back to the way we were.

Our big problem in the Christian life is our head. Our struggle is in the mind.

Faulty thinking. Stinkin' thinkin'.

Even tho you may have received Christ and you are born again, you could be missing out on the full life God has for you because of wrong thinking when it comes to who you are in Christ and what it means to follow Him.

**We need to know Jesus and who we are in Him if we are going to experience and enjoy the new life He has for us.**

How can we experience the full life in Jesus in a world system that is opposed to Him?

### Eph 4:20-24...

1. The New Life requires we Come to know Jesus personally.

v.20- "But you did not learn Christ in this way..." Not "you did not learn about Christ in this way." We can know about someone without really "knowing" them.

It's more than just head knowledge about Him- His death and res.- it's a personal relationship with a living, resurrected, life-giving person we need. When you place your trust in the fact that it is HE who died on the cross to pay the penalty you owed for the sins you have committed and will commit in your life, that is when you are born again. That is when you become a new creation in God and receive the gift of eternal life.

This new life first requires we come to know Jesus personally.

Rev.3:20- "Behold I stand..."

Picture of Jesus standing at a wooden door, lantern in hand- no handle on outside.



Have you received Him? Trusted Him for your own salvation?  
If so, you have the new life, His new life within you.

This is the first step. Growth and understanding begin from there and continue until we see Him face to face in eternity.

Now, how do we grow and experience this new life on a daily basis?

1. The New Life requires we put off the old self.

v. 22 - "that in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit."

"Former manner of life" – Life without God in the picture means we live for self. What we want when we want it. Without God in the picture we have to provide for ourselves, protect ourselves, defend our egos- we are alone- on our own. Have no idea there is any alternative. No idea there is a God who loves us, who wants to save us from all of this, protect, provide now and forever.

So, when we worry about things, we are living that former manner of life before we knew Jesus. When we respond with anger, especially when we let the sun go down on our anger, we are picking up the old, former manner of life. When we give into temptation- old self. Step on or over others for own good- old self. Flip the guy off on the highway- old self. Yell at our kids- now I'm meddling! Over the line?

Paul says, affirmed with the Lord- "Lay aside the old self." You no longer have to live that way. You are a new person.

But that's where we need a mind change a transformation really.

**2. The New Life requires a new way of thinking.**

v. 23- and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,  
To be renewed in the spirit of your mind is to adopt a new way of thinking.

**What we believe about our Position in Jesus will determine our Practice in life.**

Believing in who He is and who we are in Him makes all the difference.

You can live the life God has created you for. He has given you all you need, equipped you and empowered you to live the new life in Jesus He has given you.

So who are you in Jesus?

**Eph. 1:1-14** - Faithful in Christ Jesus, blessed with every spiritual blessing, chosen by God, holy and blameless before Him, predestined to adoption as His child, freely bestowed with His grace, redeemed (purchased) by His death on cross, forgiven of my trespasses, saved from the penalty of sin, sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise for the final day when He calls us all to Himself in heaven!

That's who we are in Jesus. That's a picture of the new you and me.  
If we will believe what God tells us about our position, it will change the way we live.

**How this works:**

When we fail and fall we feel guilty and can have thoughts like, "I am really a bad person. I will never measure up. I'll never please God."

The truth is, we are loved, forgiven children of God, there is nothing He does not know about us, yet He loves us and there is nothing He could ever find a out about us that would ever cause Him to love us less!

It's all about what we choose to believe. Our choice to believe the lie or the truth. The world says there is no God, or that if there is a God, he doesn't care about you.

That's the futility of the mind, the darkened understanding, the former manner of life, the old self. Lay it aside!

Like taking off the old worn out clothes and exchanging them for the new.

**3. The New Life requires we put on the new self and choose to wear it day by day.** We can be given a new set of clothes, but if we just leave them in the closet, what good are they to us? By the way, those old clothes of the old self? They look terrible on you! Take them off and put on the new self "created in the likeness of God, in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

A couple examples might help:

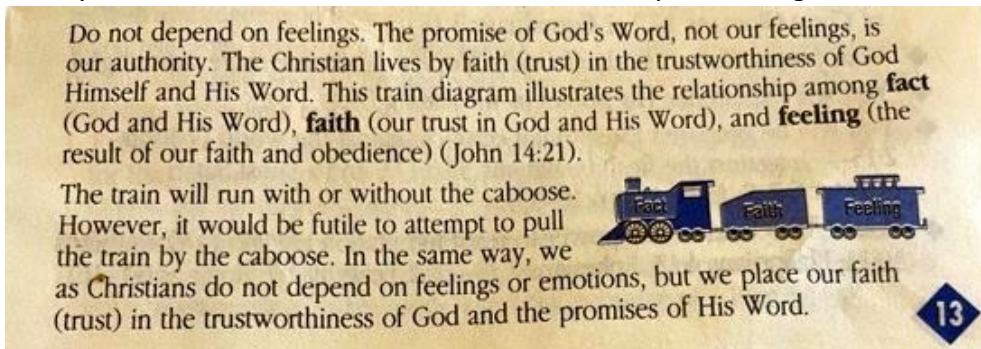
Story of Ex-Con goes to church... I am a new creature- I am in Christ and HE is in me. If Christ is in me I Shall not steal, because He is in Me and He does not steal. These are no longer rules, they are now promises!!

Example- Bible says I am forgiven all my sins and am accepted by God. But I don't feel forgiven, I don't feel accepted. You won't feel it until you choose to believe it.

**Believe your way into feeling rather than feeling your way into believing.**

Here's a little illustration that helped Diane and me when we were new believers and the biblical truth it portrays has been one of the main touch-stones of our 52 year journey of faith.

Place your Trust in the Facts of God's Word, not in your feelings:



"Futility of the mind" = putting our faith in our feelings.

**US:**

Imagine what your life could be if you learned to

**Trust in your Position rather than in your Condition.**

Here's how it works:

In Matt. 6 Jesus is recorded as saying, "Do not be anxious for your life as to what you will wear or what you will eat- if God so cares for the lilies of the field and for the birds of the air, will He not also care for you?" And get this- "Do not worry then saying 'What shall we eat, drink, wear?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek these things; for your heavenly Father knows you need these things. But seek first His Kgdm... so do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will care for itself." Trust in your position- You are a child of God, He loves you, is aware of your needs and will care for you.

Why worry? Our bank account is low, my job doesn't pay enough to make ends meet. That's my condition. Am I going to fret and stew over this? Let my feelings run my life? Steal to make ends meet? Or am I going to believe God, place my faith in my position and the truth of His Word? If I put my faith (trust) in my feelings, I am defeated, If in the facts of His Word and my position in Jesus, I am victorious!

I have exercised my faith in God and His word and I have become stronger in my faith.

What about when I sin, disobey God or hurt another person?

Again, put your faith in the truth of God's Word, not in your feelings.

**1 John 1:9** "If we confess our sins..." Believe it, accept it and confess your sin and move on in confidence.

How can we grow our faith? By exercising it. This a life-long process, but we ought to be seeing progress. You should be able to see a difference between the old person you were without Jesus and the new person you are in Him.

We should be able to relate to the old country preacher who said, "I ain't what I want to be, and I ain't what I'm gonna be, but praise God, I ain't what I used to be!"

## Questions


1. How have you seen God working in your life and world this past week?
2. Read Philippians 3:3-9. What list could you make for ways you've tried or seen others try to be a "good Christian?" What result(s) have you seen from these efforts?
3. What would it look/feel like for you to "Trust your position rather than your condition?"
4. How can your group pray for you this week?

## Summary:

Christianity is often presented as what you need to do in order to make God happy. But the life Jesus offers is about WHO you can be, not what you have to DO. How does that work? Can you really experience this new life? You can.

## Episode Breakdown:

00:04 It's us!  
00:30 It's not what you should DO  
10:30 How do we experience new life?  
17:35 A few examples  
21:00 Imagine with us...  
23:40 Move on in confidence  
24:50 Stay Breezy, Salem + oopsies  
25:50 Qs + MORE Outtakes

 Don't forget to subscribe :) <https://bit.ly/yourcrosscreek>

 Let us know you're here! Comment, or <https://bit.ly/wlcmccc>

## SHOW NOTES:

- ▶ Notes & Questions: [https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/media/2021-09-15\\_cg.pdf](https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/media/2021-09-15_cg.pdf)
- ▶ Transcript: <https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/media/2021-09-15.pdf>
- ▶ Ask for Prayer or Questions: <https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/welcome/>

## ▶ Upcoming #SalemOregon Gatherings

September 26th, 4:30pm, Our next On-site Party! Stay tuned to Social Media and <https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/party/> as we move toward a new location.

## ▶ Suggested Bible Readings:

Philippians 3:3-9  
Ephesians 2:1-10

## ▶ Music we listened to making this episode:

Lauren Daigle- Rescue: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gYR0xP1j4PY>

Weezer- Buddy Holly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kemivUKb4f4>

► Subscribe to the Podcast & listen on the go:

<https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/messages/#podcast>

► Donate to Crosscreek & keep a good thing goin': <https://www.yourcrosscreek.com/donate>