

# Are We As Christians Taking Too Much For Granted?

**Luke 2:43-46** [NIV] *“After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. **Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day.** Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.”*

Mary and Joseph supposed that the young Jesus to be in the company, went a whole day’s journey before discovering that He had been left behind.

Their fault was that they assumed that what they wanted to believe was true, they took too much for granted.

A simple check at the start of the journey would have saved them a harrowing experience of fear and uncertainty and two days’ unnecessary travel.

**Our failure to check the truth could have far more serious consequences and could lead to a personal tragedy.**

## **There is a danger that we take Christ for granted**

We “suppose” that because we hold New Testament doctrines we are therefore New Testament Christians.

**James 2:19** [NIV] *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder.”*

Satan and his demons are better theologians than any of us yet he still remains Satan and his demons still hostile to God.

**We may assume that salvation is possible without repentance, yet scriptures firmly state that to be forgiven a sin much be forsaken.**

**John 8:3-11** [NIV] *“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no-one condemned you?” “No-one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” **Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”***

Jesus told this woman that to avoid God’s condemnation she was to forsake her sinful lifestyle.

We can also be in danger of assuming that religion without a striving after righteousness is of value.

**Matthew 5:6** [NIV] *“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”*

This is what Jesus Christ said would bring us blessings. This was in total contrast to the religious rituals of the Pharisees.

We assume that faith without works has some mystic value.

**James 2:14-17** [NIV] *“What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, “Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**”*

The apostle James disagrees totally to such an assumption.

**Galatians 5:6** [NIV] *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. **The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.**”*

**Faith expresses itself through works of love, so where works of love are absent the only conclusion is that faith is absent also.**

Many Christians assume they can “accept” Christ without forsaking the influence of the world.

**James 4:4** [NIV] *“You adulterous people, don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? **Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.**”*

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle James to say something very different.

**1 John 2:15** [NIV] *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. **If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**”*

This Holy Spirit inspired statement requires no comment, only obedience.

We may also erroneously assume that we can experience justification without transformation.

**Romans 12:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, **in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.**”*

When we accept the mercy and love of God as expressed in the death and resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We also accept we must seek, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to reform the way we think as well as the way we conduct our lives.

When God declares us righteous through the acceptance of Jesus Christ’s death as a substitute for our own deserved death.

God instantly sets about making us righteous through the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit.

**Galatians 5:22-26** [NIV] *“**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.**”*

The law that condemns us to death has lost its power over us, but we must continue to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit.

**The erroneous conclusion that a converted person is automatically a transformed person has resulted in Christian churches being full of substandard Christians or even non-Christians.**

We can go astray by assuming that we can do spiritual work without spiritual power.

The Holy Spirit is **not** a luxury meant to make deluxe Christians, the Holy Spirit is an imperative necessity for any successful work being accomplished by the church.

**Only the eternal spirit can do eternal works that lead to our being given eternal life.**

Many Christians take for granted that they can “*live for Christ*” without first having died with Christ.

**Romans 6:3-4** [NIV] “*Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*”

The Holy Spirit inspired apostle Paul seems to think very differently.

The victorious Christian has known two lives.

The first life was “*in Adam*” motivated by a carnal mind that could never please God.

The second life is “*in Christ*” a new “*born again*” life.

**John 3:3-8** [NIV] “*In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. **Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.** You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*”

Without such a second birth we have no chance of becoming part of the created family of God, that is the Kingdom of God.