

# True Belief Is Active Not Passive

**Acts 16:30-31** [NIV] *“He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*

A Christian is a person who believes in Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

This is a statement that every evangelical will agree with.

Indeed evangelists preach that since the New Testament is crystal clear on this matter, there is **nothing** more to be done.

First acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

This is usually followed by baptism.

Finally, seek membership of a protestant church.

A new Christian does the latter to satisfy their craving for fellowship with others of like mind.

**This is the extent that the vast majority of Christians go to in their Christian life.**

A few Christians shy away from organised religion, as they recognise the imperfections of the churches.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of “converts” feel they can serve their Saviour better in a church fellowship.

**There is, however, one serious flaw in all the above.**

The majority who claim belief in Jesus Christ and enter into association with the community of believers do **not** have a total change of heart and mind.

From all external appearances they are **no** better morally than the ordinary educated and thinking citizen who takes **no** interest whatsoever in religion and makes **no** profession of Christianity.

Why is this?

**Romans 8:9** [NIV] *“You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.”*

Here we see stated, simply but emphatically, the definition of a true Christian.

If we do **not** have the spirit of Christ [the Holy Spirit] in us we are **not** Christians.

**Romans 8:10-11** [NIV] *“But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”*

The **only** way we will receive the gift of eternal life is if the eternal Holy Spirit is dwelling in us and directing our lives.

**Romans 8:12-14** [NIV] *“Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation, but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit*

*you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because **those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.***

**Only** those who are led by the Holy Spirit are and will be eternally the created children of God.

**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.”*

True belief brings a spiritual and moral transformation in a Christian.

This transformation begins in our mind and human spirit, then it begins to show on the outside with a dramatic change in our lifestyle.

**Note**, this is the expected reaction by God the Father on our part as a grateful response to His grace, that is the expression of His love through the sacrifice of His only non-created Son, Jesus Christ.

**John 3:16** [NIV] *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

What we have just read in Romans should be our natural reaction to the expressed love that God has for all humanity.

True belief then is active, it is **not** passive.

**True belief requires that we meet certain conditions.**

Those conditions are that we allow the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit inspired writings of His apostles, to totally dominate our lives.

This must begin from the first moment we express belief in Jesus Christ and accept His sacrifice as a substitute for our own deserved death.

A person with true saving belief must be willing to be different from others without that saving belief.

Any effort to believe we can have the benefits of redemption while still enmeshed in the world is futile.

**John 17:14-19** [NIV] *“**I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.** My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. **Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.** As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.”*

This is Jesus Christ’s own prayer for all true Christians.

The Greek translated “*sanctified*” means to be set apart for holy use, to be set apart for God to use to fulfil His will on earth.

**Matthew 7:21-23** [NIV] *“**Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

A “wake-up” call to many claiming to be Christians.

**Matthew 6:9-10** [NIV] *“This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”*

Every human being claiming to be a Christian has prayed these words, but have they all put this into practice in their lives?

**The change experienced by a truly converted person, who claims to have belief in Jesus Christ, is equal to that person moving to another country.**

This truly regenerated person feels no more at home in the world’s society than Abraham felt when he left Ur of the Chaldeans and so set out for the Promised Land.

[Read this account in **Genesis 11:27-32, Genesis 12:1-5**]

Apart from his own small company, Abraham was a stranger to everyone around him.

They all knew that Abraham was **not** one of them.

Everyone who confesses belief in Jesus Christ sets out on a similar journey to Abraham, leaving Ur, that is their present world and society and journeys towards a new country promised by God as our future dwelling.

**Hebrews 11:8-10** [NIV] *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. **By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**”*

Our journey is **not** a physical journey with our feet but a journey for our heart and human spirit.

Every newborn Christian is a migrant, and must be prepared for violent changes to their lives.

One of the first changes will be a shift of interest from earth to heaven.

**Colossians 3:1-10** [NIV] *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, **since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.**”*

This transformation will show itself in many ways so that your former friends will begin to worry about you.

If you persist, this concern may turn into opposition and persecution.

Why?

The “*once-born*” never can understand the “*twice born*.”

[See our article ‘*There Are Two Classes Of Human Beings*’ under the subject heading ‘*Born Again*’. ]

The hostility that started with Cain hating Abel still exists after 1,000s of years.

[See **Genesis 4:1-8**]

It is as true today as at the beginning of human history, a person who hates their sin will get into trouble from those who do **not** realise that they are sinners.

People resent having their friends turn away from the lifestyle they both previously enjoyed.

By implication former friends will condemn the new Christian's different way of life.

The active changes that a newly "born again" Christian will include:-

The literature that they now read.

The places they visit.

The friends they now cultivate.

What they do with their free time.

How they spend their income.

Indeed true belief leaves **no** area of the new believer's life unaffected.

This new orientation of the new believer's life will begin to change their personality.

Things that once they held to be of value may suddenly lose all their attraction.

The genuinely renewed person may even now hate some of the things they formerly loved.

Any person who recoils from making these revolutionary changes on becoming a true believing Christian, will actually be turning their back on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ their Saviour.

Many do retreat from making these dramatic changes in their lives.

Just seeking baptism and church membership will **not** make things right with the Saviour they claim to follow.

**2 Peter 2:20-22** [NIV] *"If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."*

Meditate on this powerful message that the apostle Peter was inspired by the Holy Spirit to make.

**Revelation 3:14-22** [NIV] *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so that you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so that you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so that you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

This is the message that Jesus Christ gave to all churches and the Christians fellowshipping in them.

Any claimed belief in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, must make us “*on fire*” **not** “*lukewarm*” in our attitude towards our changed way of life.

“*To him who overcomes,*” this is the message all seven churches received.

**Revelation 12:9, 11** [NIV] “*The great dragon was hurled down, that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.*” ... “***They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.***”

This is the “*overcoming*” that is being referred to.

[Download our article ‘*Resisting The Influence Of Satan Our Enemy*’ under subject heading ‘*Satan*’.]