

# Progressing In Our Christian Life

**Ephesians 5:16** [King James] *“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”*

Time for every human being is very short when compared with eternity.

As we see evil rising in society today we know, as does Satan, the instigator of all evil, that time before the end of society as we know it is short. [**Revelation 12:12**]

**Humanity has proved itself morally unfit to manage the world in which we have been placed by the kindness of the Creator God.**

In the meantime there is a company of people who have been called to prepare to take over the rulership of the world under Jesus Christ at His Second Coming.

**Revelation 1:4-6** [NIV] *“John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.”*

Christians are to prepare to rule under Jesus Christ as teachers [priests] in this new society. [**Revelation 5:9-10**]

**Revelation 19:6-9** [NIV] *“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.’ (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”’ And he added, ‘These are the true words of God.’”*

The relationship between the returning Jesus Christ and those who have prepared themselves to be teachers [priests] in this new world will be as close and intimate as a marriage.

**Note those who were invited into this partnership had prepared themselves in this present life, by progressing spiritually.**

**Revelation 20:11-12** [NIV] *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.”*

This is defining the work of all who are teachers [priests] in this New Society made up of all who had never heard of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of all mankind [**Acts 4:12**], or the Holy Spirit inspired Christian Bible. [**2 Timothy 3:16**]

Only those who have prepared to open up the Christian Bible to others will qualify to be among these teachers [priests].

All these people will have been given a second physical life, by a resurrection as prophesied by Ezekiel. [**Ezekiel 37:1-14**]

As we can see, our eternal future as Christians is dependent on our progressing in our spiritual Christian life.

We may read of the lives of great people who have already been used by the Creator God in the past, whose fervent desire to fulfil the will of God caused them to progress spiritually in their lives.

For a brief moment we may yearn to be like these spiritual giants, but the longing soon passes.

The world around us is placing claims on our time that are too insistent, so we settle back to live our ordinary life and accept the customary as normal.

Such contentment is deadly to any spiritual progress in our Christian lives.

**Galatians 5:22-23** [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.”*

All “fruit” are the result of nourishment received from the plant, bush or tree.

**John 15:1-5** [NIV] *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 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.”*

It is only when we have an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ now, in this life, that we can prepare for our future intimate relationship.

**Galatians 5:25** [NIV] *“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”*

As we keep in step with the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ will come into our day-to-day life. [**John 14:15-18**]

The Holy Spirit will constantly seek to arouse all who are complacent, “let’s move on” is the word of the Holy Spirit.

**John 7:38-39** [NIV] *“Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him. By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.”*

The Holy Spirit is never stagnant, we have to “walk quickly” to keep step with Him.

The Holy Spirit will lead the way we have to follow hard on His heels. [**Romans 8:14**] Only then will we be future created children of our Creator God.

**John 16:13** [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

When we follow the Holy Spirit He will lead us into all truth, including what is ahead for us individually if we prepare for that future.

The apostle Paul embodies this life of progressing as a Christian.

**Philippians 3:7-8, 10, 13-14** [NIV] *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ” ... “I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,” ... “Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.”*

If we accept this as the sincere expression of a normal Christian, I do not see how we can remain or justify our own indifference towards spiritual things.

Following are a few suggestions should you now desire to have definite progress in your Christian life.

### **1) Strive to get beyond a mere pensive longing –**

**Luke 9:51** [King James] *“And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,”*

Jesus Christ knew what was expected of Him by God the Father and set His face like a flint to fulfil that will of God.

**Every human being is as holy as they really want to be, but this want must be all-compelling and personally motivated.**

**Proverbs 6:6-11** [NIV] *“Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.”*

**This Proverb can be applied to spiritual poverty as well as physical scarcity.**

Set aside time every day to pray and search the scriptures for the will of the Creator God and surrender yourself totally to it. [**Romans 12:1**]

### **2) Put far away every un-Christian habit from you –**

If other “Christians” practice certain things without compunction, God may be calling you to come nearer to Him than these other Christians care to come.

May the words “*others may, I cannot*” be how we judge any practice that does **not** conform with God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

**1 Thessalonians 5:21-22** [King James] *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. **Abstain from all appearance of evil.**”*

Seek only to bring honour and glory to our Creator God by the way we conduct our lives.

**1 Corinthians 11:31** [NIV] *“But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.”*

If we are, during our lives, judging ourselves against the standards as recorded in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, we will **not** be facing a harsh judgement from Jesus Christ. [**2 Corinthians 5:10**]

### **3) Focus your heart, mind and human spirit on Jesus Christ –**

**Colossians 3:1-4** [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.”*

Only by focussing our lives on serving our Saviour Jesus Christ will we find complete fulfilment.

Focussing on Jesus Christ means setting our mind on things that are eternal, **not** temporal.

A Christian’s real home is where Jesus Christ lives.

To focus on the eternal is to look at life from the Creator God's perspective.

This is the antidote to materialism, for we gain a proper perspective on material goods when we take God's view of them. [Matthew 16:26; Luke 21:34; Matthew 13:22]

#### **4) Invite the Holy Spirit to direct your life –**

**John 14:17** [NIV] *“the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

Two differing relationships with the Holy Spirit. He can be **with us**, guiding us into all truth [John 16:13], bringing scriptures we have studied to remembrance [John 14:26], bring us to the point of true repentance [John 16:8].

But if we invite the Holy Spirit to **enter into us** and direct our lives, He will be causing “fruits” of righteousness to grow within our nature. [Galatians 5:22-23]

#### **5) Begin to practice the presence of the Creator God in your life –**

This means a constant awareness of our Creator and Saviour, and there is one Psalm that can help us do this.

**Psalms 139:1-16** [NIV] *“O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. You hem me in, behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.”*

This is a passage of scripture we should return to often to meditate on in conjunction with **Romans 12:1-2**.