

Are You A Christian In Deed?

The world is full of nominal Christians, but how many are Christians in deed?

The Word of God, the Christian Bible, makes it clear that mere faith is not enough.

Bob Rowland wrote a very moving poem, '*Listen Christian*' giving a very realistic view of human response to those in need.

I was hungry – and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you.

I was imprisoned – and you crept off quietly to your church building and in the crypt prayed for my release.

I was naked – and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick – and you knelt and thanked God for your good health.

I was homeless – and you preached to me about the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely – and you left me alone to pray for me.

Christian – you seem so holy, so close to God. But I'm still very hungry, lonely and cold.

This poignant poem is an obvious modification of the words of Jesus Christ as recorded by Matthew.

Matthew 25:35-36 [New King James] *“for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.”*

What Jesus Christ was describing was a way of life that involved more than mere lip service.

It involved action, deeds, for in the eyes of Jesus Christ, mere nominal Christianity is woefully inadequate.

James 2:19-20 [New King James] *“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe, and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, **that faith without works is dead?**”*

James, the younger brother of Jesus Christ, knew just how Jesus Christ responded to human need.

Ephesians 2:10 [New King James] *“For we are His workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.**”*

Here we are told the very purpose for which a person is called to be a Christian and the purpose of the Christian Church.

This was the consistent teaching of the apostle Paul.

This referred to works of love, outgoing concern for the welfare of all human beings, **not** 'works' of the law.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 [New King James] *“Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*

Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

Paul in this letter to Timothy links “good works” with eternal life.

Good works in a Christian life are not a mere by-product of their life, but central to it.

Christianity is not a selfish, egocentric, sheltered, self-feeding brand of religion.

Rather, Christianity is outgoing, serving, giving, helping, concerned way of life.

The Christian and the Christian Church, the spiritual body of Jesus Christ on earth, should echo the very words of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:28-30 [New King James] *“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*

Every Christian should be yoked to Jesus Christ as we work with Him for the welfare of all humanity.

Jesus Christ did **not** bring to His disciples a burdensome religion of endless, Talmudic do’s and don’ts or a series of self-righteous rituals.

Jesus Christ personally expressed a way of life that was based on love and compassion for all human beings, that His disciples, that is true Christians, should follow in their own lives.

John 17:15-21 [New King James] *“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”*

Jesus Christ did not expect His followers to be spiritual isolationists. He expected them to mix and mingle with contemporary society, while **not** being a part of it, [verse 14].

Matthew 5:14-16 [New King James] *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

Those who observe the life and actions of a true Christian will be inspired to glorify God as a result of what they see.

Matthew 20:25-28 [New King James] *“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”*

The chief claim for greatness is service.

True Christianity is a state of mind, **not** a set of legalistic dogmas and Talmudic legislation.

Matthew 22:35-40 [New King James] *“Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to him, ““You*

shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’”

God gave to His chosen people the Ten Commandments and practices that produce character and ensure an orderly society. Jesus Christ condensed these commands and practices down to ‘Love to God and human beings.’”

John 13:34-35 [New King James] *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

This love and outgoing concern for all other human beings is the essence of true Christianity.

It is the life-force of the true Christian mind.

Without love and service, all ritual, traditions and denominationalism is meaningless.

A Christian without loving works, directed towards other human beings, is no Christian at all.

John 14:15-18 [New King James] *“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

It is **not** by our own power alone that we live the Christian life of love and service.

Jesus Christ promises His disciples the Holy Spirit, to at first work alongside us, guiding us into all truth, [**John 16:13**] then if we surrender our lives to Him will actively dwell in us directing our lives and producing in us the very character of God, [**Galatians 5:22-25**], the first and foremost “fruit” being love.

The Greek word translated “love” is “agapé” a spontaneous love that is irrespective of the “rights” or response of the recipient, a sacrificial love that puts aside personal desires, to love the object of that love.

John 7:37-39 [New King James] *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

These “living waters” are the life-giving acts of love, generated in a Holy Spirit filled Christian, directed to other human beings.

How do we become such a true Christian?

Romans 12:1 [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.”*

By our total surrender of our lives to God as a living sacrifice showing our gratitude to Him for what He has done for all humanity through Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated “bodies” is “soma,” indicating the whole life-force, physical body, mind and human spirit, [**John 32:8**].

Romans 12:2 [NIV] *“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.”*

The Holy Spirit will then re-educate our minds changing us from a nominal Christian to a Christian in deed.

Other relevant scriptures not mentioned in this article:

Leviticus 19:34 [New King James] *“The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”*

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 [New King James] *“If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs.”*

Proverbs 21:13 [New King James] *“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.”*

Proverbs 3:27-28 [New King James] *“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so. Do not say to your neighbour, ‘Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it,’ when you have it with you.”*

Luke 10:25-37 [New King James] *“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?’ So he answered and said, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbour as yourself.” And He said to him, ‘You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.’ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’ Then Jesus answered and said: ‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, “Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.” So which of these three do you think was neighbour to him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’”*

1 Thessalonians 5:14-15 [New King James] *“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.”*

Titus 2:7 [New King James] *“in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility,”*

Titus 3:14 [New King James] *“And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.”*

Hebrews 10:24 [New King James] *“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,”*

Hebrews 13:16 [New King James] *“But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”*

James 1:27 [New King James] *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”*

James 2:15-16 [New King James] *“If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?”*

1 John 3:16-19 [New King James] *“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him.”*