

Christianity Is a Life to Be Lived

by James Blaine Chapman

A genuine Christian lives a life of honesty, purity, reverence, and faithfulness, and seeks to do good to the bodies and souls of men.

Scripture: Exodus 20:1, Matthew 7:12, 1 Corinthians 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:14, Galatians 6:10, Philippians 4:8

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Disciplines"

Description

James Blaine Chapman emphasizes that Christianity is a life to be lived, rooted in the Golden Rule which serves as the ethical foundation for proper conduct. The principles of Christian living are not just rules but standards to be approximated in practical daily life. A genuine Christian is characterized by honesty, truthfulness, purity in thoughts and actions, reverence towards God, temperance, humility, seriousness, and avoidance of ungodly influences. Additionally, a true Christian is courteous, industrious, forbearing, faithful in spiritual disciplines, seeks to do good to others, and is zealous for the expansion of God's kingdom on earth.

Transcript

2. Christianity is a life to be lived. There are not many "rules of thumb" in the New Testament, but the principles of proper conduct are clearly set forth. Our Master made a summary of the ethical demands which underlie the Christian life in what has come to be called "The Golden Rule" -- "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also even unto them." But in reality that is not a rule, but a principle out of which all rules for right living spring.

If it is claimed that other religions have statements regarding ethical conduct that parallel this statement from our Master, we raise no objection whatsoever; for, after all, Christian ethics are scientific as well as scriptural, and experience leads men to the same conclusions that revelation presents.

The Ten Commandments, especially the last six in the list, set forth in more detail the same principle as the Golden Rule, except that the Ten Commandments stop with prohibition of evil, while the Golden Rule enjoins the doing of positive good.

But to be a Christian one must not only acknowledge the standard as being correct, he must approximate it in practical living. The Christian makes the Golden Rule his standard of life both as to words and deeds, and also to thoughts and tempers.

If a man is a genuine Christian he is an honest man. He will not steal that which is rightly his neighbor's; he will not take advantage in buying and selling; he will not accept a full day's pay for less than a day's work, he will not accept a day's work for less than a day's pay, he will not do anything that is of hurt to his neighbor's property. But more than that, the Christian will pay his debts, will co-operate for the advantage of all, and will be dependable and upright in all his business transactions.

If a man is a genuine Christian he will tell the truth. He will account his word as valid as his bond. He will do whatever he promises to do. He will keep his appointments with others to the measure of his ability. He will not slander or backbite. He will not indulge in gossip hurtful to the good name of his neighbor. His conversation is always chaste, as becometh one whose mind and heart are pure.

If a man is a genuine Christian, he will think pure thoughts and live a clean life. He will account the elder women as mothers, those of his own age as sisters, and the younger as daughters; and he will conduct himself in a manner becoming to such relations.

The Christian makes no reservation as to brotherhood, as do the Mohammedans and even certain organizations in Christian lands. These, we are told, acknowledge their obligations to be honest and truthful only to members of their specific faith or order, and the demands of purity are limited to the mothers, wives and daughters of clan brothers. But the Christian obligations are to all, without regard to race, nation or other incidentals of life. The Christian's field of moral obligation is as wide as the human race. "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." The obligation is to all, with special obligation to those who may be left out of the gratuity of others on account of their membership in the Christian community.

The genuine Christian is reverent, hence does not take the name of God in vain or speak lightly of sacred things. He loves God and the people of God, hence does not profane the Lord's Day or neglect attendance upon the services of the church. He is a temperate man, and thinks of his body as God's temple; hence he does not use intoxicating liquor or tobacco or in any other manner indulge in that which is hurtful to his body, mind or morals. He is humble, and so does not yield to the tokens of pride in either dress or behavior. He is serious, and so does not care for the theater, the ballroom, the circus, and other like places. He does not gamble or take part in games of chance. He finds no delight in the fellowship of the ungodly, and hence avoids connections that are in violation of the scriptural injunction against being yoked together with unbelievers, and having fellowship with the unrighteous (2 Corinthians 6: 14-17).

The genuine Christian is courteous to all men; he is industrious and economical that he may have to give to the support of the gospel, and to those less fortunate than himself; he is forbearing in his attitude toward other Christians and toward all men; he loves God with all his heart, so that he accounts being right more important than any promotion; he is faithful in attendance upon all the "means of grace" for his own soul's good, and as an example to others.

The genuine Christian seeks by all possible means to do good to the bodies and souls of men. He seeks to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and to minister to the needy, as opportunity and ability are given.

The genuine Christian is zealous for the expansion of God's kingdom in the earth. He invites people to the house of God, and presses home upon the unsaved the claims of the gospel and seeks by every means to encompass the salvation of the lost.

The genuine Christian is "easy to be entreated" in things relating to God and His work, and therefore he abides in hearty fellowship with the church, and is in full sympathy with the program of the gospel throughout the world.

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